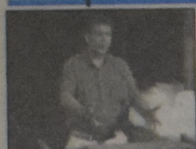


CHRISTIAN COURIER

September 9, 2002

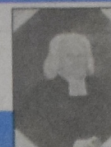
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58th year of publication

Alberta farmers grateful for Hay West, but skeptical of government assistance

Alan Doerksen

EDMONTON – Alberta farmers, hit hard by this summer's drought, are grateful for donations of hay from Ontario farmers, but are skeptical of government programs which encourage environmental stewardship. "Self-preservation takes precedence over conservation every day," asserts Herman Bolton, a farmer in Leduc, Alta., who is on the board of directors of Earthkeeping Alberta.

The Alberta government is offering several programs to help farmers recover from the severe drought. Alberta's latest commit-



AGRICULTURE CANADA

Federal Agriculture Minister Lyle Vanclief

ment is a \$200,000 assistance package to the Hay West program, according to the provincial gov-

ernment's website. Provincial funds will help harvest and bale bumper hay crops in eastern Canada so that they can be shipped to western farmers. Hay West is a volunteer effort that involves Central and Eastern Canadian farmers donating hay to Prairie livestock producers who are experiencing feed shortages due to drought.

New programs to help producers with drought-related problems such as grasshopper control have also been created in Alberta. Through a comprehensive set of risk management programs for agricultural producers, Alberta offers support of more than \$1 billion. To help ensure a steady water supply on farms, the Alberta Farm Water Program allows farmers to construct on-farm, long-term water supply projects.

Government support expanding

Meanwhile, the federal government has expanded its support of Hay West. In late August, the government announced it will pay for the use of an additional 187 rail cars and associated costs to get more Hay West donations to farmers in parched regions of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Speaking to reporters during a visit to drought-stricken areas in both provinces in late August, Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief announced details of the \$2.2 million of additional support to further assist the Hay West campaign. "The Government of Canada is extremely proud of the efforts of Hay West organizers and the generous farmers in Central and Eastern Canada who are assisting farmers in the west," said Vanclief.

Vanclief also announced that \$10 million would be immediately released to help fund water supply projects in drought-stricken areas in Canada. As part of a four-year,

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GRACE DEUTSCH AND AVANTHA SWAN

Grazing ground is becoming sparse in Alberta.

\$60-million drought-mitigation commitment made July 12, money available this year will fund water supply expansion projects in the severest drought-affected areas across the country, particularly Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The government will dedicate the remaining \$50 million over the following three years to the development of solutions to water supply issues across Canada considered a priority for agriculture. These may include such projects as large scale pipelines, schemes to improve management of existing water supplies (e.g. small dams).

And the federally-run Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) is an ongoing program which provides technical and financial assistance to farmers, ranchers, agricultural and conservation groups, rural communities and municipalities for the development of long-term solutions to water supply issues.

Farmers critical

But despite these and other government programs, Bolton and *Christian Courier* agriculture columnist Vern Gleddie – who runs a sheep ranch near Edmonton – are critical of government assistance

available to farmers. Regarding conservation-related programs, Bolton says that Earthkeeping Alberta was "quite involved with it for some years. We found we were subsidizing the government with our money and our time."

For some farmers, "conservation is a priority," says Bolton. "Some people are principled and put more money into it." But when faced with drought conditions, "thoughts of conservation go out the window. It's replaced by self-preservation," he asserts. This year, Alberta farmers are facing "desperate conditions. We're just on the edge." Although farmers know what they need to do about conservation, for many it is not economically viable, he suggests. At a recent Earthkeeping meeting to discuss conservation, there was near-zero attendance, Bolton observes.

This is the third year in a row Alberta has faced drought-like conditions, explains Bolton. This has had an especially harsh effect on farms such as his, which has a thin layer of topsoil unable to store much water.

Bolton is grateful for farmers in Eastern Canada who have donated hay to western farmers. "People

See PRAIRIE page 2...

World Council of Churches in financial crunch

Harry der Nederlanden (with files from ENI)

GENEVA, Switzerland –The central committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting in Geneva (a city with notoriously high rent) August 26 - Sept. 3, was told that the organization is in a "financially unsustainable position." That means if it keeps doing what it's doing, it's going broke. Financial reports for 2001 show that it's 5.9 million francs in the red. (A Swiss franc is approximately equivalent to a Canadian dollar, so that's a lot of money.)

Stock market blamed

Blame for the deficit was put squarely on the stock market and a poor return on investments, a decrease in contributions from member churches, and the cost of giving a number of staff early retirement last year as a way to save money.

A Swedish member of the committee speculated that part of the reason for the decrease in income was that ecumenism has become

such a hot item that a lot of other organizations and local projects have drained away some of the available cash. There's competition for the ecumenical dollar.

The WCC, the world's largest ecumenical organization, is facing serious cash-flow problems. It has a staff of 180 people, and the central committee, enjoying the hospitality of Geneva, counts 158 members.

The central committee reports that it is taking quick action to make substantial cuts in WCC programs in an attempt to reduce spending by some five million. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson of the Reformed Church in America warned that across-the-board cuts will not work. "Central Committee must have clear criteria to make clear choices," he insisted. Norman Shanks of the Church of Scotland said, "We must ask, 'What needs to be done that only the WCC can do?'" The news reports made no mention of cutting the size of the central committee.

See WCC FACES page 3...

News

Prairie farmers cynical of government bureaucracy

... continued from page 1

are amazed by the generosity of Ontario farmers. Somebody out there cares," he says.

But he is critical of Vanciel, who he says has suggested to farmers, "Well, guys, it's time to get some off-farm jobs. I take great exception to it." The Alberta government has offered some support to farmers, which helps, admits Bolton. But "a lot of [government] programs have too many loops or paperwork." Sometimes, this leads to "falsified paperwork," and some farmers write down what the governments want to hear. Bolton says Alberta farmers also object to "having to account to bureaucrats who have no ideas about the practicalities" of farming.

Prohibitive costs

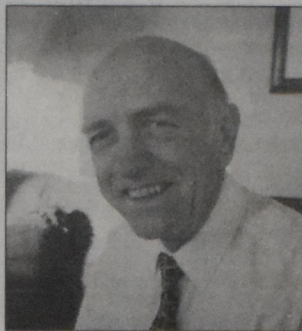
Earthkeeping Alberta is also suffering, says Bolton. Its office is closed, the agency is not currently

functioning, but it is trying to raise money to pay off its debt.

Vern Gleddie acknowledges several federal and Alberta programs which help farmers sustain their farms and preserve the environment. For instance, the PFRA helps to reverse soil loss on farms, and offers trees to farmers as shelter from wind. The Alberta government helps out with the Alberta tillage conservation project, which "encourages minimal tillage to preserve moisture." But Gleddie notes, "As far as I know, they [the Alberta government] don't offer any financial incentives" for conservation efforts by farmers.

Prairie farmers are cynical of government programs, partly because "there's a lot of money wasted in bureaucracy." Other farmers don't participate because of "not being aware of the existence of some policies."

Another reason is some pro-



COURTESY VERN GLEDDIE

CC agriculture columnist Vern Gleddie.

grams require contributions from farmers, which makes costs prohibitive. "They think it's just not going to pay," says Gleddie, so instead farmers manage on their own.

But unlike Bolton, Gleddie thinks paperwork is not a serious obstacle. It is "much less so than a

few years ago." But some farmers would refuse government help "on principle," he contends. For instance, they might not want to take "a direct handout."

Gleddie is also critical of provincial and federal governments for not having a long-term agricultural policy. However, he supports the PFRA, which he calls a good organization.

Heartwarming

Like Bolton, Gleddie appreciates the generosity of Eastern Canadian farmers helping with Hay West. "I think farmers here are grateful and are finding it heartwarming that people are lending a helping hand in a time of crisis."

But he notes, "the current drought here is not being dealt with as an industry-wide crisis [by government]." Instead, "a few farmers are getting something here or there," and government

ministers are "looking for photo opportunities."

The drought is "a huge thing," asserts Gleddie. "I don't think the government or urban people grasp that. People are insulated from what happens in their little enclave." But American farmers have told him that the drought extends from Alberta as far south as Texas.

Personally, says Gleddie, "we've been affected totally. We're very much in the centre of the dry area.... This is a dry year in a string of increasingly dry years. This year we have to buy all our hay." That compares with last year, when he had to buy only half of his hay, at \$25 per bale, compared with this year's inflated price of \$80 per bale.

Asked if Christian farmers are more concerned about conservation than others, Gleddie says, "I would hope so. I see too many who aren't any different."

Ontario farmers resist taking part in government assistance programs

Alan Doerksen

GUELPH, Ont. — Farmers who want to sustain their farms and preserve the environment at the same time have access to a variety of assistance programs run by Canada's federal and provincial governments. But even when drought conditions persist in much of Canada this year, many farmers choose to not take part in these government programs. This year, the Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario (CFFO) is doing research to find out why farmers tend to be resistant to participating in environmental programs.

Identifying Barriers to Participation in Agri-Environmental Programs in Ontario is the title of CFFO's project, which is under the direction of geographer Dr. Charlotte McCallum, consultant to the CFFO. McCallum has been working for the CFFO for the past year on the subject of agri-environmental programs.

In the past two decades, a number of public programs have been implemented in Ontario and elsewhere in Canada to encourage farmers to practice good stewardship, reports CFFO in a press release. Such programs potentially contribute to both agricultural and environmental sustainability. But a CFFO survey conducted in 2001 suggests that program involvement is not optimum.

Since the mid-1980s, there have been a large number of government programs available to help farmers, McCallum tells *Christian Courier*. These included grants to help farm-



COURTESY DR. CHARLOTTE MCCALLUM

Dr. Charlotte McCallum

ers improve their environmental practices. Such programs "come most of the time from the federal level — once in awhile from the provincial level," she observes. "The federal government is really on the front line." Of the provinces, "Quebec has probably the most generous assistance to farmers," but Ontario is not even close, observes McCallum.

The Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) is one example of a long-term program run by the federal government, for more than 60 years, which helps farmers in western Canada face challenges presented by a demanding climate and a changing industry. PFRA has resources such as technical assistance on conservation practices, crop productivity management, sustainable grazing systems, cattle production, resource management planning and adoption of sustainable land uses,

according to Agriculture Canada. PFRA's Shelterbelt Centre supports healthy landscapes through production and distribution of native plants for farm and field 'shelterbelts,' which protect farms from bad weather.

Reasons for participating or not

Last year, McCallum spent several days at four Ontario farm shows doing research on this issue. Of the 537 people she surveyed, she found that 46 per cent of them had heard of government programs which help farmers pay for environmentally-friendly projects on farmland, but have never participated. About 36 per cent have participated or are now participating in these projects, while 17 per cent had never heard of them, McCallum reported in CFFO's newsletter, *Earthkeeping Ontario*.

McCallum also asked farmers: "What motivated you to take part in a voluntary incentive program, or if you have never taken part in one, what might motivate you?" The two most common answers were "A sense of environmental responsibility" (176 responses) and "My personal convictions about stewardship" (175). Only 33 gave the reason "A way to reduce expenses, earn extra income." Persuasion by others to get involved (137) and an opportunity for learning/training (110) were other reasons farmers provided.

When McCallum asked farmers "Why might you decide not to take part in a voluntary incentive pro-

gram?"; the main reasons given were "Too many conditions might be attached" (174 responses) and "Too much time/paperwork" (139). Other key responses were: "All in all, it might not be worth it economically" (71), "Don't like others involved in how I manage my land" (49), and "Already have the best environmental stewardship possible" (42).

Analyzing the results of that survey, McCallum wrote in *Earthkeeping Ontario*: "A large number [of farmers] find the programs financially beneficial. Reasons for not participating clearly relate to conditions which may be attached to the programs and the time and paperwork involved in carrying them out — in other words, design and delivery issues. Contrary to conventional wisdom, those surveyed are not very concerned about others being involved in farm decision-making, nor are they particularly hindered from participating because of an uncertain economic outcome. The results suggest that people are generally willing to participate in these programs when they are user-friendly, and do so for reasons of environmental and stewardship concern."

Scope for improvement

But McCallum tells CC, "there was definitely scope for improvement.... There's still room for a lot more people to participate" in government programs. So this year, she plans to dig deeper to find out more about why farmers are not participating much.

This year's research will include interviews and focus groups throughout Ontario, a representative survey of Ontario farmers and a public stakeholder meeting on October 16 at the CFFO offices. The findings will allow decision-makers in CFFO to make suggestions on the design and implementation of future agri-environmental programs and encourage further involvement in existing ones. Stakeholders McCallum will consult include some water quality authorities, such as the Grand River Conservation Authority, she explains.

Looking at Christian farmers, as opposed to others, McCallum asserts, "they certainly feel they are good stewards of their land.... Stewardship principles are very strong — these are Christian in origin." But she notes that the concepts of agricultural and environmental sustainability "are pretty big concepts, and growing vaguer by the day. Our perception of what's good stewardship is changing.... Most farmers who are in it for the long haul definitely know they need to keep taking care of [the land.]"

CFFO wants to encourage more Christian farmers to take part in government-sponsored programs, asserts McCallum. The agency also wants "to eventually expand these [programs] to include environmental payments for doing anything above and beyond environmental regulations." McCallum plans to complete her research by December.

News Analysis

WCC faces financial problems and complaints

... continued from page 1

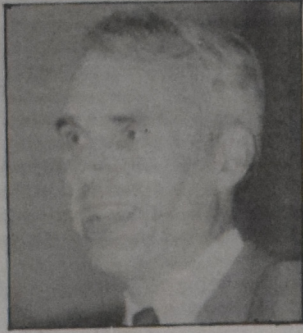
Konrad Raiser, the general secretary, defended this year's budget projections. He said they were not unrealistic because they were based on last year's actual income (which, however, has been dropping steeply according to its own reports). However, member churches have been experiencing shortfalls and have, therefore, been unable to meet their obligations. When pledges are not met, explained Raiser, "our planning and budgeting become useless."

Raiser will retire as general secretary next year after 11 years of service. A search committee was created to nominate a successor.

The WCC also has to deal with strident complaints from its Orthodox members. Two have already left, and if any more do so, the WCC's claim to be an inclusive body would be jeopardized. Of course, it has never been able to attract very many Pentecostal or other Evangelical churches into its ranks, so that claim may have been questionable to begin with.

The Orthodox churches' main complaint is that WCC statements and programs are too dominated by Protestant approaches. Many Orthodox have taken strong exception to its liberal protestant views on inclusive language, the ordination of women, and the nature of human sexuality.

(One might suppose there would be a store of goodwill built up after the WCC bent over backward during the Cold War to ac-



Konrad Raiser, WCC's general secretary.

commodate the Orthodox churches behind the Iron Curtain – at considerable cost to its reputation among American Evangelicals. But the Orthodox clergy are a hard-nosed lot.)

Globalization warning

Conrad Raiser's opening remarks warned about the impact of globalization. He had hoped that the shock of 9-11 would serve as an incentive to the nations of the world "to acknowledge their fundamental condition of mutual vulnerability and thus become an incentive for new forms of cooperation and solidarity."

Instead, he lamented, the response of those in the rich and powerful nations has been "to demand increased security against the threats of terrorism." So 9-11 has "sharpened the dynamic of conflict inherent in globalization" instead

of pushing us toward greater cooperation.

The blind acceptance of market forces, he went on to say, will probably lead to the exclusion of many and, instead of spreading the wealth, will condemn more and more to poverty, disease, unemployment and violence. Theirs will be an on-going "experience of victimization" as they struggle to survive "under the domination of powerful forces beyond their control."

"It is this general sense of being condemned to the role of victim," he suggested, that militants exploit to create more terrorists.

At the same time, the West also regards itself as a victim of aggression. So as each blames the other, the cycle of violence and counter-violence continues, just as it does in the confrontation between Israel and Palestine.

Raiser fears that in this climate of mutual recrimination security has become the central preoccupation, and in its name international standards of human rights are being put aside.

Many of the general secretary's remarks were obviously directed toward Western nations and to the U.S. in particular. Once again, it draws on a model that equates the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers with the terrible effect of poverty, starvation and disease in many non-Western nations. It's a dubious equation in both directions.

I think we can safely say that the suffering of millions upon millions

of the poor in the Southern Hemisphere is a million times greater than that caused by all terrorist attacks taken together. However, the failure of the global economy to elevate the material well-being of those living in Arab or other poor countries can hardly be seen as a deliberate and violent attack on those countries. On the contrary, a great deal has been done to try to integrate those nations into the global economy so they can benefit more fully. This may not have worked very well, and the motivation may not have been completely altruistic, but it was hardly an act of war in a different guise. In addition, a great deal of money has been donated in an effort to mitigate harmful effects.

To suggest that the U.S. and other Western countries should put security concerns on the back burner while ideologues filled with hate continue to train terrorists once again makes the WCC sound flaky. However, Raiser is justified in pointing out how quickly we devote vast sums of money to increase security for ourselves as well as to blow up mountains in Afghanistan, while donating piddling amounts, for example, to the war against AIDS in Africa.

But the gap between Western affluence and killing poverty in the South will hardly be overcome by even generous donations from the West. And gifts will hardly assuage the resentment of the Arab nations. The global economy must begin to function very differently for those

peoples to become more prosperous on their own. And the political culture within those nations must change as well. A big order.

Despite the clamor of those on the left, no one has a viable alternative to the market economy – certainly not the socialists. Wherever socialism has been implemented, it has done more damage than the free-market economy, to people as well as to the environment.

Is there a third way?

The rhetoric of a "third way" has always attracted me, and I'd love to be able to point CC readers to a politics and economics that opts neither for capitalism nor for socialism, but for the most part that remains very vague. While many from the WCC and also many Reformational Christians accuse Evangelicals, especially American ones, of uncritically embracing capitalism and the so-called free market (true, for the most part), many Evangelicals (and some Reformed thinkers like John Bolt and Harry Antonides) see the rhetoric of the WCC and others sliding into socialist attempts at social engineering (also not without warrant). After decades of rhetoric about a "third way," we still have Christians facing either to the left or to the right.

Let me hear from you: Is there any concrete content to a "third way"? Or are we condemned to be torn between a Christianized right and a Christianized left?

As Zimbabweans starve, Mugabe keeps shutting down farms

Harry der Nederlanden (with files from ENI, AP, the *National Post*, and the *New York Times*)

ZIMBABWE — "I have spent the past two weeks in Zimbabwe watching the surreal spectacle of white farmers being arrested in the middle of a famine for continuing to try to grow food on their land." So begins a story in the *National Post* by R.W. Johnson. He describes why Mugabe set about destroying the culture of the white farms in his country. They were among the few places where Zimbabweans didn't have to prove allegiance to Mugabe's Zanu-PF party to get help when times were tough.

"When famine struck the communal land areas," writes Johnson, "Mugabe would ruthlessly link food handouts to the holding of Zanu-PF membership cards, but on white farms the farmers ensured that workers and their families never starved, without enquiring about their political views. In ef-

fect, white farmers created a social umbrella protecting those beneath from the harshness of Zanu-PF hegemony."

Mugabe blamed white farmers for defeat

As a result, when in 2000 Mugabe's constitutional referendum went down to defeat, he blamed the influence of the white farmers over their workers and he began his land reform campaign.

After independence in 1980, Mugabe, with help from Britain and the U.S., had begun buying back land from white farmers to redistribute to blacks. However, for 20 years nothing much came of the program; part of the money was squandered and vast tracts of state-owned land remained unused.

Even now much of the action is simply destructive, doing little to help even Mugabe militants, and crippling the country's capacity to produce food. *The New York Times* quotes a white farmer under siege

at his farm near Bulawayo: "While the Government carries a begging bowl we, the producers of food, are being criminalized. Zimbabwe once fed the region. Now we can't feed ourselves."

A week after the August 9 deadline given to 2,900 white farmers to vacate their farms, some 60 percent had not moved; however, at least 200 had been arrested.

Jenni Williams of a farmer's group, Justice for Agriculture, told AP that, although they had no intention of confronting the police, they would fight for their farms through the courts. "Farmers are not defying the government, but rather orders they believe to be illegal," she said.

Even those who have court orders staying the eviction are being arrested.

An economist in Harare, quoted in the *Times*, said, "Robert Mugabe is employing the tactics of Pol Pot. He plans to get rid of the dissenting half of the population by starving

them to death." A village that made the mistake of voting for the opposition in last February's elections finds itself being punished, as they wait in vain for food trucks to arrive.

The Roman Catholic Church reports that after being stopped from food distribution in the Binga district on the border with Zambia, it is once again allowed to operate. It was feeding over 40,000 children, drilling wells and providing education when a government minister ordered it to stop because it had structures similar to the government. The real reason, say critics, is that the government believes it supported the opposition party during the recent elections.

Tensions have risen in the Anglican Church of Zimbabwe as a former Anglican bishop who has long been cosy with Mugabe came out in favor of the so-called land reform program. Recently the dean of the main cathedral in Harare, Rev. Godfrey Tawonezwi, who is a

friend of another bishop loyal to Mugabe, received a vote of no confidence from his church. He has been accused of running the affairs of the church like an autocrat, according to ENI.

The former vicar-general of the Anglican church in Harare, Rev. Tim Neill, an outspoken critic of Mugabe, was picked up by officers for questioning. The police were trying to find out who had published a document urging farmers to fight for their farms through the courts. After resigning last year in protest against the appointment of a Mugabe supporter as the bishop of Harare, Neill has been working for a charity helping displaced farm workers.

According to the U.N., without food donations from abroad, as many as six million Zimbabweans in a country of 13 million are threatened with starvation, much of it due to drought conditions that threaten the lives of an additional six million in contiguous countries.

Editorial

Writing and media as contested terrain

Harry der Nederlanden

I attended the ICS conference held at Redeemer in mid-August and found myself challenged and inspired by the keynote speakers, John Suk and George Vandeveld, and also by every workshop I attended. You will find a rather personal report of some of what happened there on pages 12 and 13 of this issue. John Suk's lecture was especially thought-provoking for me.

Since in the past I've read many of the thinkers Suk talked about, I was probably more ready to interact with his ideas than most, but the themes he raised about a sea-change in how we experience and come to know the world about us and our own history are important apart from their "interest" to you or me. There are big changes afoot in our society and culture. That much is certain, even if we may differ in some respects about the nature of those changes. I'm grateful to John Suk for prodding us to discuss those changes.

Christians should be in the thick of it

Do they involve a metamorphosis in our very nature? Or does this ascribe far too much power, even a certain determinism, to technology? It's an important discussion, and Christians should be in the thick of it. In fact, two of the men who framed this issue — Marshal McLuhan and Walter Ong — were Catholics.

I want to join Suk in underlining the power of the word, not just of the logical or rhetorical word as embodied in theology or apologetics (defense of the faith), but of the

word as it becomes woven into the warp and woof of our bodily, earthly, social and cultural existence.

For several hundred years, the thought and the imagination of the West has tended toward two poles — that of idealism and that of materialism. Both, as Evan Runner taught us, are offspring of humanism. In the ideas John Suk introduced to us, that polarity has been bridged in many ways.

Technology affects how we relate to reality

How we think and how we experience and how we communicate are not activities shaped only in the realm of mind where the human spirit operates in unfettered freedom. We have learned that technologies like writing, printing, book publishing, filmmaking, television, computers and video machines can have a deeply formative impact on our ways of "seeing" — not just on the form but on the very content of our knowledge and on how we relate to reality. In fact, it becomes impossible to disentangle form and content. Institutions like publishing firms and newspapers, Hollywood and media conglomerates determine not just *what* we get to read and see but the very *way* we see. These technologies and institutions take on a life of their own, deeply influencing not just how we spend our time but also what we deem important. These are spiritual-material structures that mold us all — believer as well as unbeliever — inwardly as well as outwardly.

This is a healthy antidote to the individualistic notion that each of us is truly original and unique in the life of our minds, and that inwardly we are wholly free to make decisions — if only we don't allow ourselves to be too tied to our fellows, especially in the aggregate, as mass man. This vision of authentic liberty and inwardness perhaps came to its purest expression in some versions of existentialism, which arose in reaction to the ideologies of National Socialism and Communism but even more to the herd mentality of the middle classes.

This insight into the spiritually formative nature of media was true in the period when print was paramount, but it is even more true today, when the media are much, much more pervasive than books or magazines ever were. Print tended to link us more with previous generations. In my library, I have books of myths gathered from around the world, Greek philosophy and drama from hundreds of years before Christ, church fathers such as St. Augustine, reprints of Medieval thinkers like Aquinas and Bonaventure, collections of writings from Renaissance times, old and middle English, Shakespeare, sermons by John Donne, fat sets of Kuyper and Bavinck that I inherited from my father, and so on. When I began really reading in my last years of high school, I was deeply impressed by writers who roamed across this literature with an easy familiarity. They seemed to have read everything, and I wanted badly to know what they were talking about. This was the model of learning and wisdom most of us grew up with.

But this connection back in time is not what media like film and television cultivate. These tend, instead, to link us with our contemporary culture, with what is happening around us, so much so that they tend almost to overwhelm and erase those links with the past. They tempt us to forget that we are temporal creatures with deep and important roots in the past, and we lose the long perspective. More and more, we become creatures of the now, assuming that everything of consequence is of the present. This, ironically, makes us more time-bound, more people of the moment, more liable to be blown about by every fad and every wind of doctrine. Our selfhood becomes

very shallow.

This is, at any rate, one school of thought about the impact of contemporary media upon our souls, our selfhoods.

How can Gospel survive and transform?

It's good to reflect on these things. However, this vision of the pervasive and invasive effect of media upon who we are — and upon our children — can fill us with a sense of anxiety and helplessness. If the very media in which I seek to communicate my faith put such a strong stamp on what I say, how can the new thing of the Gospel survive, penetrate, transform?

Let's remind ourselves that writing was by no means a neutral technology. When Milton sat down to write his great Christian poem, *Paradise Lost*, what forms did he draw on? The epic and tragedy — both inherited from pagan Greece and Rome. Every genre (comedy, tragedy, epic, ode, elegy, novel, etc.) is a space beset by powers and principalities; it is contested terrain, and writing always becomes a spiritual struggle, not just in terms of content but with the very media in which you are trying to witness to the truth. *In spite of that*, Milton did manage to wrest a potent and brilliant witness from his material. Or was it *because* of his encounter with those ancient, pagan genres?

Similarly, the first novels celebrated the individual as the agent of history and depicted time as the story of progress and enlightenment. Many teachers, when they teach their students how to read the novel, focusing on character as the basis of plot, are basically acting as hawkers for a secular worldview. Any Christian novelist (and reader) worth his salt must wrestle with the ideology deposited in that form, that genre. He or she is helped, of course, by the fact that writers with very different worldviews, such as George Eliot with her strong sense of community, have struggled with that spirit of individualism in the novel and refashioned it to their own use.

Stepping outside of literature, we can see similar dynamics in every discipline. A psychotherapist must wrestle with the spirit of Freud and his followers which continue to haunt that discipline. A social worker will have to do battle with the spirit of the founder August Comte and of Karl Marx. These figures continue to be important, not because they were first, not because they were original and smart, but because they saw something vital, something real, something they didn't invent — and that's why it continues to be important to us latecomers.

In other words, Christians have always had to articulate and embody their faith in words, categories, concepts, genres, media and disciplines that were at odds with it. This is not to say that there is nothing new under the sun, for I think Suk is right when he suggests that it is harder than ever to maintain a uniquely Christian perspective under the onslaught of contemporary media.

But then we must remember that what the Greek tragedians saw, what Plato and Freud and Marx saw was part of God's creation. God spoke first, and in his creation that Word continues to speak, to call us to his truth. Because we know that, we know that if we attend closely, faithfully, communally, what we hear speaking behind those wayward, idolatrous spirits is the voice of God himself. He, not Plato or Marx or Freud, spoke first.

And it is his speaking first that enables us to go forth confidently to reconquer that contested terrain in his name.

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Letters/News

Why go to church? To worship God

When one reads an article one likes to see his/her own opinions reinforced. It was with this in mind I read A.A. van Ruler's article titled "Why go to Church?" in the issue of July 29th, 2002. Of course I was disappointed. And I would like to express my opinion. Why were we created? The Westminster Catechism puts it this way in Question and Answer 1: "What is the chief end of man? Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever". God created man so he will be worshipped!

Why go to church? To worship God. We worship him in our own private time, and we worship him in the fellowship of believers. This is what I was looking for in that article. Everything else is secondary in my opinion. We listen to the message, God's answer to our worship, to bring us closer to him, and to learn how we can serve and worship him better. People are converted so more people will worship him.

In short, the emphasis is not on us, it is on God.

I humbly say that this is just my opinion.

I want you to know that I still enjoy your paper, even after almost 40 years.

Keep up with His blessing!

Henny Donkersteeg
Spencerville, Ont.

Reply:

You are quite right in your opinion. And Van Ruler would happily agree with you. As you've noticed by now, his first answers, as he admits himself, do not get to the heart of the matter.

The fault is entirely the editor's. He should have provided a brief introduction to the series to prepare the reader. That he didn't do so is due to a streak of perversity on his part. He didn't want the shock of Van Ruler's unexpected and often easily dismissed answers to be softened by a warning.

I plead biblical precedent, however. Jesus often makes outrageously one-sided statements that our pastors must constantly soften. He tells his followers they must hate their mothers and fathers to be loyal to him. He doesn't immediately turn around and say, "Now let me qualify that...." He lets it stand in all its starkness.

That's my excuse. I hope you will become more and more pleased by Van Ruler as he develops his answer to meet that of the Westminster Catechism, for I know of no theologian who would agree more with that classical statement.

The editor

The Vicar of Jesus and the poor

Your article by Alan Doerksen in CC August 12, 2002 "Pope connects with youth, inspires Catholics, Protestants" was very interesting and informative, not the least on account of the remarks by George Vandervele who has had the privilege to communicate with the pope personally. There is no doubt that this pope is a very devoted man.

Yet, despite his devotion, pope John Paul II also seems to be either the product (victim) or the representative or both of the Catholic religious system just as we all are of our own system in which we find our niche. It seems such a pity that so often the human system stands in between the Scriptural Jesus and the people who need to hear his message. For example, one could mention meaningful prayer as Jesus taught his disciples.

Then, I am not so sure whether I could share the enthusiasm of many about this visit, considering that this event costs the city of Toronto eight to nine million dollars for security, while there is such limited public commitment, for instance, for shelter for the homeless. The poor had to be kept out of the way, in contrast to Jesus who came for those who were not self-sufficient.

One wonders, therefore, whether the name of the Jesus in the press is the same as the one who is the image of the Father.

Dirk Velthuisen,
Guelph, Ont.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)-682-8313, or by e-mail to: editor@christiancourier.ca

Canada reconsiders Iranian Christian family converts' immigration

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — The Canadian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, summoned an Iranian Christian family stranded in central Turkey for a second immigration interview on July 30, igniting hopes that the government of Canada is giving fresh consideration to their case for religious asylum.

Accompanied by his wife and three daughters, Mahmoud Erfani was granted a 90-minute interview by a Canadian immigration official. Although Erfani's first application to the Canadian Embassy was rejected in late April, this second interview was granted on the basis of "new and relevant information" which the Iranian convert to Christianity submitted to the embassy on June 21.

Iranian government persecuted relatives

In a four-page letter, Erfani had detailed Iranian government persecution of several relatives in his native city of Mashhad since he fled Iran three years ago. He also produced a Turkish court indictment against an Iranian Muslim who harassed him and his family in Nevsehir this past April for leaving Islam to become Christians.

Speaking by telephone from Ankara, Erfani said that Canadian officials told him during his interview that he would receive a letter informing him of their decision on his case.

Immigration to Canada appears to be the only option left for the Erfani family, who fled across the Iranian border to Turkey in July 1999. Although they were granted temporary residency in Turkey, the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Ankara turned down their request for official refugee status and also denied two subsequent appeals, leaving them liable for deportation back to Iran.

But after an Anglican church in Toronto pledged full sponsorship for the family in June 2001, the Canadian Embassy in Ankara announced last August they would allow the Erfanis to apply for immigration. Canada remains one of the few Western nations accepting immigrants who have not been able to obtain formal UNHCR refugee status.

The Erfanis waited nine months for their April 18 interview at the Canadian Embassy, only to be informed five days later that their application was denied. No reasons were cited in the letter, although their sponsoring church in Canada believed Mrs. Erfani's poor health was a determining factor. Now in a wheelchair, Erfani's wife, Atefeh, suffers from advancing multiple sclerosis diagnosed eight years ago.

Erfani was assisted in preparing a written appeal to the Canadian authorities which he filed at the Canadian Embassy on June 21. Two weeks later, Nevsehir police authorities extended his family's expired residence permits, explaining the renewals had been authorized by UNHCR officials in Ankara.

Former Muslims faced hostility

As former Muslims who converted to Christianity 21 years ago, Mahmoud and Atefeh Erfani were subjected to growing hostility in their native Mashhad, Iran, by agents of the secret police and "Basijis," paramilitary Muslim vigilantes endorsed by the Islamic regime. During the 1990s, a

convert Christian pastor in the city was executed for apostasy, the city's two Protestant churches were forced to close, and three other convert couples were arrested, threatened and booked on apostasy charges.

The Erfanis themselves were evicted from their home in the spring of 1999, and Erfani was abducted and threatened repeatedly by local authorities to renounce his Christian faith and return to Islam. But when they arrived in Turkey, they had no

documents to "prove" their claims of overt and ongoing religious persecution.

"Canada's rejection of this family as convention refugees is becoming somewhat of an international embarrassment," Canadian Member of Parliament Paul E. Forseth wrote to the Canadian Embassy in Ankara in mid-May. "What is so problematic about this family, other than the wife has MS?"

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Environment

Networking project explores place of humans in creation



COURTESY STEVE BOUMA-PREDIGER

Steve Bouma-Prediger: how important is 'place' to people and the environment?

Alan Doerksen

EDMONTON — What does it mean for humans to be simultaneously in society and in nature? And how important is 'place' to people and the environment? These are questions that biology professor John Wood and four colleagues are exploring as part of a special scholar networking project.

Wood, who writes *Christian Courier's* Creation Waits column, explains that he and four scholars from other disciplines are one year into the three-year project, which is being funded by a \$15,000 grant from the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). The purpose of the program is to enable small groups of Christian scholars to network in ways that will lead to individual and collaborative scholarship on focused themes of keen interest to the larger academic world — thereby introducing Christian voices into contemporary academic conversations.

CCCU prefers to support

research for which the substance of the scholarship is significantly informed by a Christian faith perspective. The three-year grant enables scholars to meet, share research, critique each other's work and plan future individual or collaborative research projects related to a common theme.

For Wood and his colleagues, "the first year was really getting together and doing some planning" — because the five had not worked together before.

Looking at the idea of 'place,' Wood observes, "Place has been a missing element in much of the Christian reflection on environmental questions. There has been some work, especially with respect to agriculture and the land, but not much elsewhere. So we are trying to initiate a discussion of place from a multi-disciplinary perspective."

Two of Wood's colleagues teach geography and environmental studies: Mark Bjelland of Gustavus Adolphus College (in St. Peter, Minn.), and Janel Curry of

Conversations with trees and grass

Harry der Nederlanden

There is an on-again, off-again breeze blowing today. As I walk under a stand of tall, spreading poplars, the breeze makes me feel uneasy, as if it is the prelude of storms to come or the reminder of storms past. But it's a beautiful August day with high, near-clear skies unusual in Ontario. The small wisps of white cloud serve only to punctuate the endless melody of blue. So why this subliminal sense of anxiety?

As I pass out from under the poplars and turn down a street lined with silver maples, I realize why. It's the poplars. They're worry-warts and gossips. Give them a refreshing summer breeze, and before you know it, they're looking at the sky and clucking their tongues pessimistically, restlessly, anxiously. Worse than farmers.

Trees have different personalities

I'm glad I don't live in a grove of poplars. They'll relax and doze in the sun if it's absolutely still, but at the slightest movement of air, there's an uneasy hubbub as they begin to clatter and chatter with anxiety. They'd get on your nerves after a while.

Silver maples have a quite different personality. They've read the Heidelberg Catechism and love to speak comfort. The Spirit, when she brooded over their birth, sang to them, "Comfort, comfort you my people." As I walked among them, they whispered, "Sh-sh-sh-sh...." A soft, sibilant, silvery sound to match their supple leaves. "Sh-sh-sh-sh...." Liquid as the sound of water washing over a sandy beach; soothing as the sound of blood surging through your veins and the sigh of your lungs breathing deeply — the sound of life itself.

Across the park three huge weeping willows catch my eye. I've always thought them aptly named. They remind me of the Psalm, "By Babel's streams we sat and wept...." I imagine widowed women — husbands, fathers, sons slain — sitting by a stream washing their long hair, their heads bowed over the water, weeping, their tears mingling with the water they're pouring over one another's hair. Consoling the unconsolable. The grief of heaven itself.

But these willows are not grieving. Not today. From where I'm standing I can't hear them, but I watch them dance, swinging their long, flexible branches like voluminous, silken skirts. They're almost twirling and leaping in the breeze like Elizabeth and her maiden companions in the film "Elizabeth". Exile from the court — a liberation, a gift of play. Yes, today the willows are intoxicated with sunlight and blue sky, exhilarated by the breeze, sensually flashing their silver flesh like exotic dancers, teasing us with hints of a deeper intimacy. I imagine them humming carefree songs, innocently unaware of their seductive beauty.

So the trees, the grasses, the waters speak to us

day after day, communing with our bodies. They don't sermonize, at least not often. Mostly they utter things we aren't even aware of at the time, just keeping up a background conversation that gives tone to our lives. Every so often they waken us with deep whispers — and groans — that resonate with our own deepest selves. We live in a creation constantly at prayer. Although we're called to be its conscience and consciousness, often it's the other way around.

Language cuts like sharp blade of grass

There are so many other languages that compete for our attention. An aluminum Coke can tumbles along in front of my feet, its speech surprisingly musical but insistent. Then the whuff-whuff of a McDonalds paper bag loping along the sidewalk. The first rattles on about emptiness and the second mumbles about surfeit, before tumbling into the ditch like a drunkard. These are sermonizers, scurrying about looking for an audience like a preacher without a church. There's a white plastic bag fluffed with air, doing somersaults, arabesques, ballet-like leaps to impress me with the beauty of aimless movement. It's into Zen-Buddhism, tempting my eyes and lulling my mind with the peace of nothingness. Dance into the void with me, whispers this white ballerina.

No, when you pay attention, the talk is very diverse. Only very seldom is it sentimental, a matter of saying kind things just to make you feel better. Sometimes the language cuts like a sharp blade of grass can cut.

Here, in a vacant lot I pass almost daily, between gravel and asphalt and trash, the grass flourishes uncut, growing tall slender stalks and thick heads, some with wheat-like kernels, heavy, bending their stems like monks at prayer, some with frail, feathery plumes that spread like fireworks. Here it gathers in clumps with long, spare blades; there thick whorls hug the earth like nests; in between, short, squat blades disperse themselves in green universality. Interrupted, my walk — a discipline — falters. I stumble. I was not listening for parables in grass, but was addressed, not by the Spirit, but by grass, the grass that speaks to flesh, and its speech was insidious, subversive — rustling and whispering things pertinent only in unintended vacant lots, things indifferent to civil discourse and communication — just the thready rasp of air on frail reality, like the rasp of my father's labored breath as I held the slender stalk of his swaying self so he could breathe, just breathe, once more.

Calvin College. Susan Bratton is chair of Baylor University's Environmental Studies department (in Waco, Texas). Bringing a different viewpoint to the team is Steve Bouma-Prediger, a professor of religion at Hope College in Holland, Mich.

With/Out boundaries

One main focus of this project is a summer seminar called *Christian*

Environmentalism With/Out Boundaries: Living as Part of God's Good Earth, which will be held at Calvin College July 6-25 next year. The seminar, which is co-sponsored by Calvin College and CCCU, "will explore the full integration of human society and nature," according to a description submitted by Wood. "This will be done through readings and discussions across the disciplines

of philosophy, theology, the social sciences, and ecology. The central question is: *How can our understanding of self and our moral understanding be deepened to account for our membership in societies that are embedded in particular places, which are, in turn, embedded within ecosystems?* This question reflects the challenge, within academia and the

Continued on page 13...

Arts/Media

When worship and work are one

Alan Doerksen

MISSISSAUGA, Ont. — Colleen Reinders and Grace Moes live up to the line from a praise song which says: "worship and work must be one." The two Mississauga, Ont., women run Unity Music Ministries (UMM), and have been leading and teaching about worship renewal together for 21 years. Despite their busy schedules, they have also managed to raise children as "stay-at-home moms" — although their work sometimes takes them across the continent.

"We love working with musicians and teaching worship," explains Reinders. "We do praise and worship concerts. We also do conferences."

Their mission is "to challenge Christians to fully understand their role as worshipers." They believe that "A common focus on Jesus Christ as the object of our worship will bring about the unity of believers."

The two women travel across North America to offer conferences and workshops. "We do one large engagement a month," explains Reinders. They also have three or four more local engagements monthly. This allows them to work from home and spend time with their families.

"Sometimes people assume we're involved in ministry non-stop," say Reinders and Moes on their website (www.colleenandgrace.com). "We're quick to point out that not only is this a part-time endeavor, but we're also stay-at-home moms who do our own housework, drive our kids all over town, and indulge regularly in the good things like gardening, reading, coffee and laughter."

The pair work primarily with Christian Reformed Churches, but also visit Reformed Church of



PHOTOS COURTESY UNITY MUSIC MINISTRIES

Colleen Reinders (above right) and Grace Moes (front and centre) pose with Belma Vardy (top left) and another colleague in a corn field.

America, Presbyterian and Pentecostal congregations.

Blending old and new

At their workshops, Reinders teaches topics such as playing piano by ear and the relationship dynamics of the worship team. Moes focuses on subjects such as "blending the old and the new, and worship leadership: how to be a good worship leader," explains Reinders. Sometimes the pair work with others, such as Belma Vardy, who teaches drama and dance. Vardy, who was featured earlier this year in *Christian Courier*, is also a member of Reinders' and Moes' congregation: Meadowvale Community Christian Reformed Church.

"It sometimes seems as if we've chosen a very grandiose title for a ministry consisting of only two people," state the women on their website. But they point out: "After all these years, UMM is still a very uncomplicated, home-based kind of effort that God has blessed to do things we never expected. Along the way, he's provided many wonderful people to walk beside us with prayer, encouragement, ideas, advice and a challenge to accountability. Our husbands, Mike Reinders and Andy Moes, certainly provide all of these things and willingly take over home duties when we need to be away. During the earlier years, Gerrit Verstraete and Pastor Henry

Lunshof helped us shape a ministry vision and also gave us a lot of freedom to explore that vision within their ministries.

"Today we remain under the covering of our home church, Meadowvale Community CRC, and our pastor, Sam Cooper. The Celebration Team, which leads our church in worship, plays a vital role in our ongoing growth in praise and worship."

Faith and word of mouth

Reinders and Moes have produced seven CD recordings featuring praise and worship music, which can be ordered from their website. Other than the website, says Reinders, "We've never advertised ever.... We have been a ministry based on faith and word of mouth."

Looking at how UMM got started, Reinders explains, on her website, "As I look back on my life, I see God's hand of blessing and direction in every area. He put me in a loving Christian family with strong morals; gave me Christian education and godly role models; trained me for nine years in the Praise Makers choir; provided a wonderful husband and four precious children; and gave me a special and unique friend, Grace [Moes]. Before Mike asked me to marry him and leave my family in B.C., God 'called' me to Ontario. I received a 'vision' of myself in Meadowvale and knew in my heart it was from God. I was only in Ontario one week and God put Grace in my life and I've loved her ever since."

How they got started

Moes relates, "Colleen and I had never met each other before and were attending the same church here in Mississauga. A member of that church who is still known as a true prayer servant felt

that God would have the two of us meet each other.... After sharing some music ideas with each other, Colleen asked me to consider leading worship for mid-week services at our church. I said sure, not knowing that what I was going to experience with Colleen and others leading these services would change my life. That was in 1981 — seven children (collectively), six recordings, and countless wonderful praise and worship events ago."

Inspirational influences

Reinders explains the origins of her interest in worship leading as dating back to her teens. "As a teenager, through struggles and a recognition of my sin, I was driven to God's word, I discovered that as I studied his word I got to know him more. In knowing him, his attributes and his wonderful saving grace for me, I came to love him. Today I know that that kind of love is the very essence of worship. I also read an article by Watchman Nee entitled 'Ministry to the house and ministry to the Lord' that dramatically opened my eyes about

worship."

Moes explains, on the UMM website, "Books by Judson Cornwall, Graham Kendrick, Lamar Boschman and many others, as well as the teaching ministries of pastors and worship leaders we've had the privilege of hearing/knowing have all added to our own journey of understanding this incredible opportunity — worship. It's been our experiences while leading people in worship and being worshipers ourselves that has put everything we've heard or studied to the test."

Recently, Reinders and Moes have brought their special blend of worship leading to a Coffee Break/Small Group Ministry Conference in St. Paul, Minn., in June, and a GEMS Counselors convention at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, in July. Most recently, Reinders and Moes led a worship time at the Institute for Christian Studies August conference on Reconciliation (see related stories in this issue).

Seniors project developed with energy and Christian spirit

Future residents of Shalom Evergreen Terrace prepare for occupancy this Fall. With 80% of suites sold this new Life Lease Christian community, designed exclusively for seniors 55 plus has filled a need for an alternative housing option. This is a community you can have faith in!

For anyone considering this quality lifestyle, now is the time. History tells us those who wait to see the paint on the wall will have to endure a long waiting list and higher prices!

To learn more about this Christian community, plan to attend Monday Open Houses from 10:00 a.m. to 12 noon at Mountainview CRC, 290 Main St. East, Grimsby Call (905) 309-7888 to view our model suite.

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Church

Hungarian grievances dominate Reformed Christian meeting

Andreas Havinga Oradea

ROMANIA (ENI) — Wrongs that ethnic Hungarians charge have been committed against them in eastern Europe and especially Romania, particularly during the communist era, dominated the opening days of a European meeting of Reformed Christians, which took place recently in Romania.

Forty-eight delegates from Reformed churches gathered in the border town of Oradea, close to Hungary, August 18-23 for the meeting of the European Area Council of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC). The council meetings take place every seven years.

Krister Andersson, the president of WARC's European area, told delegates that questions about the legacies of communist rule had been repeatedly raised in past years in the European Area Committee, a body that meets between the coun-

cil meetings.

Hungarian-speaking churches have a special position within the WARC, representing almost all of the 2.6 million Reformed Christians in eastern and central Europe, mainly in Hungary and neighboring regions.

The meeting opened August 18 with a ceremony held in a local sports stadium. The 3,000-capacity indoor stadium was packed with Hungarian speakers from the region, some in traditional costumes, as well as with participants of the WARC meeting. Historical flags with the Hungarian national colors of red, white and green were prominently displayed.

Strongly national tone

While many of the foreign guests were moved by the passionate singing of the largely local congregation, there were mixed reactions to the strongly national

tone of the event. Some remarked that it seemed more like a political rally, featuring a succession of mainly Hungarian-speaking dignitaries from the region.

The gathering is the first time that WARC's European Area Council has met in a former communist-ruled country in Eastern Europe.

Andersson noted, "Many in the West cannot really understand what you in the East went through."

Humbly listening

The delegates from other parts of Europe had, he said, come to "humbly listen" to what their Romanian hosts and others in former Soviet bloc countries had to say.

For his part, Laszlo Toekes, bishop of the host church, the Reformed Church in Romania, told the delegates, "We need to confess past sins."

Toekes warned that "the past lives on in the present" and that in Romania the ghost of former dictator Nicolae Ceausescu "still haunts us at every turn." He called on WARC's European council to take "a clear stand" on the crimes of the communist past.

Toekes charged former WARC general secretary Milan Opozensky, a Czech theologian, with playing down the "communist terror" of the Soviet era and "flatly denying that either the catastrophic world-political role of communism or its atrocities could be compared with the horrors of fascism."

Harsh criticism

Some delegates also doled out harsh criticism of the World Council of Churches (WCC) for what they said was its failure to denounce human rights violations in the former communist countries of eastern and central Europe.

The WCC's silence caused the world body to become "allies of our oppressors," a former Czech dissident, retired pastor Alfred Kocab, charged in a keynote paper read at the conference.

Kocab was prevented from attending the WARC meeting in person because of the floods that have been wreaking havoc in the Czech Republic.

In his paper he said the WCC's failure to criticize human rights violations dated from when the Orthodox churches in Eastern Europe became members in the world body after 1961.

By contrast, the WCC continued issuing public statements against human rights violations in other parts of the world, such as the

apartheid system of racism in South Africa and the 1973 coup of General Augusto Pinochet in Chile.

World Council paid a high price

WCC representative Michiel Hardon told journalists that "the worst the WCC could do would be to duck the issue" of past wrongs. He explained that the WCC's interest in behind-the-scenes diplomacy on human rights during the communist era was "to keep open the links with our official churches in totalitarian countries in other parts of the world." However, the WCC had "paid a high price" for this policy.

Hardon pointed out that WCC general secretary Konrad Raiser had held talks with former dissidents of the Charter 77 human rights movement that were "very open, very honest."

"We will continue these discussions," he assured delegates. However, facing up to this past was not just a matter for the WCC but a matter for the ecumenical movement as a whole. "We will press for [this], but so far we have not been very successful," he admitted.

German historian Katharina Kunter encouraged the churches to face the past, as this could also be liberating. However, she warned that if churches had no vision for the future, then the past could seem threatening. Dealing with the past needed to be more than churches merely insisting on lost rights, such as properties confiscated by the state.

'World's largest church' to be built in South Korea

Dan Wooding

SEOUL, South Korea (ANS) — Plans have been announced in South Korea for the construction of what is believed to be the world's largest church building that will hold up to 200,000 worshippers.

Work is due to begin on "The Grand Sanctuary," on a site yet to be finalized in or close to the capital city of Seoul in 2003 or 2004, announced the Rev. Dr. Lee Jae-Rock, senior pastor of the Manmin Joong-Ang church in Seoul in an interview.

"The diameter of 'The Grand Sanctuary' will be 600 metres and between 150,000-200,000 people will worship at the same time in it," said Dr. Lee, whose church already has 75,000 members.

TV monitors for each seat

He said that one unusual aspect of the mega-church would be the fact that there will be TV monitors at the back of each seat. "The congregation will be able to comfortably watch what's going on in his or her own seat. The round altar will be at the center of the sanctuary, rotating around and going up and down," he stated.

When asked why he wanted to build a church as big as this, Dr. Lee said, "There have been so many magnificent buildings for human beings to please man since the creation of the earth. Even now there are lots of skyscrapers and great, luxurious buildings for men but not one as big as this for the (triune) God — the Father, Son and

the Holy Spirit. We need the building for our God which shows his glory, power, and love and in which men, both believers and unbelievers, can feel that great love.

"There is one big sanctuary in Rome, Italy but it has a lot of statues in it and the atmosphere is different from what we are talking about."

Johnny Kim, international director of Manmin Ministries based in Seoul said that the basic design work on "The Grand Sanctuary" has been completed and once the site is selected and the finances are in, they will start work on it, which could begin in either 2003 or 2004. "If things move ahead quicker, then we'd like to start working as soon as possible," he said. "We are really excited with the project because we know that God is alive and is almighty and faithful. He has been so faithful to our Manmin ministry up to now and we believe that he is guiding us in this project. Once he has promised something to Manmin, he never failed to accomplish it. It is the same with 'The Grand Sanctuary.' We firmly believe that he will accomplish this vision for his glory very soon."

Dan Wooding, an award winning British journalist now living in Southern California, is the founder and international director of ASSIST (Aid to Special Saints in Strategic Times). His writings are on the ASSIST Website at: www.assist-ministries.com

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Friday, October 11 at 8:00 pm, **St. Catharines**
St Denis Roman Catholic Church, Lake Street

Saturday, October 12 at 8:00 pm, **Brampton**
Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church, 63 Church St.

Admission: \$10.00

BY ANONYMOUS

Believing and disbelieving church

LONDON (EP) — A third of Church of England clergy either do not believe in, or have serious doubts about, the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ as recorded in Scripture, according to a recent survey. The study, which surveyed nearly 2,000 of the Anglican Church's 10,000 clergy, also found that only half of the ministers believe in Christ's virgin birth, and only half think that faith in Jesus Christ is the sole route to salvation.

Many still believe in Trinity, creation

However, the survey, conducted by Christian Research, did find that more than 75 per cent overall still cling to the doctrine of the Trinity and a similar percentage believe that Christ died to take away the sins of the world. Also, more than 80 per cent were comfortable with the concept that God created the world. The Rev. Robbie Low, a member of the conservative church group Cost of Conscience, which commissioned the survey, said of the results, "There are clearly two Churches operating in the Church of England: the believing Church and the disbelieving Church...."

Church

Pakistani Christian acquitted of blasphemy

LAHORE, Pakistan (Zenit.org) — In a surprise decision, the Supreme Court in Islamabad has acquitted a Pakistani Christian who was sentenced to death for alleged blasphemy against Islam.

The Christian Voice of Pakistan reported that Ayub Masih, a 34-year-old resident of the Punjab province, had been jailed since October 1996 for speaking well of Salman Rushdie's book *The Sa-*

tanic Verses.

But according to defense counsel Abid Minto, the real reason behind the arrest was to grab the land owned by Masih and 17 other neighboring Christian families. The attorney general admitted that Mohammad Akram, the plaintiff, had succeeded in his intent.

The happiest day

"It's the happiest day of my life

to see something good coming out of Pakistan," said Robin Gill, president of VIRSA, a New York-based organization working for Pakistani expatriates.

Before the decision by the Supreme Court, Masih was twice convicted and sentenced to death by hanging — first by the Sahiwal Session Court in April 1998, and then by the Lahore High Court in July 2001.

Also in August, thousands of Pakistani Christians observed a "black day" of mourning for the victims of anti-Christian attacks in several cities.

Christians held protest marches in Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta against violence, and called for greater protection of their churches, schools and communities. Marches were forbidden in Islamabad, the capital, for security reasons.

Eleven people died in August in

attacks on a Christian school in Murree, 40 kilometres northeast of Islamabad, and a Christian hospital in Taxila, 25 km west of the capital.

These were the latest of a series of anti-Christian or anti-Western attacks in Pakistan. Since October, eight attacks have resulted in 59 dead, including 43 Pakistanis. Christians represent two per cent of the 145 million inhabitants of this predominantly Muslim country.

'Virtual' church spins web to reach those outside the pews

Cedric Pulford

LONDON, England (ENI) — An ambitious "virtual church" that cuts across regional boundaries in Britain is tapping into the appeal of clubbing for the teen and twenties generation.

Organized around the website www.church.co.uk, it aims to reach those who are "uncomfortable with church but aware of their spirituality," according to one of the founders, minister and broadcaster Steve Chalke, and his colleague, Joe Davis.

Emphasizing informality

Instead of ear-splitting music, drink and drugs, the clubbers watch videos, discuss books or review current issues, all from a Christian perspective in a situation planned to emphasize informality.

Meeting in cafes, pubs, bookshops, libraries or simply private homes, the clubs are intended to be open to people beyond the church as well as those already within it. Chalke and Davis point out that too often churches reach only those who are already interested in the Christian message.

They say: "The vast majority of the Church's 'outreach' strategies focus on those who have already progressed a fair distance on the spiritual journey."

The Church has an "ongoing weakness in creating environments for those 'beyond the Church' to feel relaxed enough to honestly think about and explore Christian spirituality."

The website church.co.uk includes discussion forums in which views can be aired on subjects as far apart as Brazil's World Cup football team praying on the pitch and whether Muslims go to heaven.

Adam — one of those contributing to a forum — found it "weird" that promiscuous sex, drug abuse and violence are accepted as normal, yet "as soon as a high profile



CHURCH.CO.UK PHOTO
Steve Chalke

football team are seen giving praise and respect to Jesus — our Lord, Savior, an all round decent bloke (without sounding irreverent!) — there is a big uproar."

Boudi declared: "Of course Muslims can get into heaven, it's not as full of bigots as you'd think."

For Matt, "to be with Jesus after he returns we have to accept him as Savior and Lord, nothing else."

Not bigotry, but a fact

Noel said that to exclude Muslims from heaven was not bigotry but "a mere fact, as it is set forth by the word of God, the Bible."

Indigo — real name Paul Hutchinson — is a keen participant in website discussions, which he finds "honest and challenging."

He told ENI: "I think this is partly because people feel more willing to share their opinions across the safety of the Internet, and partly because of the range of people who contribute to the discussions."

Paul, aged 27, is a member of a Presbyterian church in Belfast.

He says: "Church.co.uk has probably made me more confident about sharing my faith with non-Christian friends. It is a big encouragement to see the Christian message being presented in a challenging way, whilst still respecting the views and opinions of people who are not Christians."

Kwang — full name Kwang Eun-Jung — enjoys being "challenged and stretched" through taking part in website discussions.

A Korean by birth, Kwang, aged 27, lives in London. She says she has Christian relationships with

friends from college and other friends and neighbors, as well as in a local church. She told ENI: "Church.co.uk has encouraged me to think about why I believe what I believe about things from creation to the end."

Linked with Alpha course

Church.co.uk is part of the Oasis charitable trust, and has links with the Evangelical Alliance and the Alpha program, a popular course in the essentials of Christianity devised by the Holy Trinity, Brompton, church in London.

In a message to club leaders, Steve Chalke and Joe Davis stress the need to discard structures and agendas — "to allow the group members to dictate the pace."

Through the website, leaders can call on a range of special features on topics of appeal to the core 18-35 age group. Other back-up includes the church.co.uk Bible, which uses the text of the Contemporary English Version and reinforces the biblical story with 100 articles on subjects ranging from shopping to extraterrestrials.

The website makes it inviting for users to join in discussion groups, but editor Jon Harris stresses that interactivity "is the strength of the project but not the end of the project." The aim, he told ENI, is to build face-to-face relationships, maximizing the opportunities for people to encounter God for themselves. The next step could be a mainstream church, an Alpha course which may evolve into a house group, or one of the church.co.uk clubs.

Harris, who studied for three years at the London Bible College, said: "This is my dream job. It allows me to reach some of the 90 per cent and more who are not connected in a meaningful way to the Church."

Western churches protest violence against Serbian Orthodox in Kosovo

GENEVA, Switzerland (ENI) — Leaders in the World Council of Churches and the Conference of European Churches have protested to the head of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo about continued violence faced there by members of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

"We are writing to express our profound concern at the continued violence facing members of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Kosovo and Metohija in the recent period," Dr. Konrad Raiser, the general secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Dr. Keith Clements who holds the corresponding office for the Conference of European Churches, wrote today to Michael Steiner, the UN head in Kosovo.

As well as the letter to Steiner, the special representative of the UN secretary general, a similar letter was also addressed to Patriarch Pavle of the Serbian Orthodox Church.

"The deliberate attacks on the churches and holy places of the Serbian Orthodox Church occurring in Kosovo and Metohija at this

time," Raiser and Clements wrote without citing any specific incidents, "are a painful and scandalous manifestation of the extremism and instability still affecting parts of this region."

Inadequate protection

On behalf of the WCC and the CEC, the two general secretaries condemned acts of violence, which reflected "the inadequacy of the international protection provided by the interim authorities in Kosovo to the minority communities, and particularly to the Serbian community."

They appealed for "effective security and justice for all the peoples and the protection of their spiritual and cultural inheritance in Kosovo."

"It is the firm belief of our organizations," they state, "that a lasting solution for peace in this region can only be based on a situation of tolerance and respect for all ethnic and religious communities."

They called on churches and religious communities to "contribute to an opening of minds and a calming of hearts at this time."

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Christian Living

Why go to church? (4)

To experience human existence to the full

A.A. van Ruler

Our fourth answer to our question, 'Why go to church?' gets closer to the inner meaning of churchgoing. Here we begin to explore its meaning in terms of the content and essence of the worship service.

What happens in church that might give us a motive for going? Can we experience something there that we cannot experience anywhere else and in no other way? If so, this would give us an answer so clear and so bright it would turn on not just churchgoers but would even make the unchurched reconsider. If something wholly unique and exceptional happens in church, you'd think twice about missing it.

But we're only beginning to get closer to the inner meaning. We can't say everything at once. Still, step by step, we're getting closer. This fourth answer is a transitional one. Human existence is not the same thing as the church. So we are approaching the worship service from without, from human existence.

Foundational importance

Nevertheless, the fact that we go to church in order to experience human existence to the full is of foundational importance for the other meanings that get at the content. The answer I'm about to develop only opens up to those that follow. And the answers still to come can only be properly understood if we first let the full impact and meaning of this one sink in.

What does 'existence' or 'to exist' mean? We can answer this in two ways, both of which are of significance to our thesis.

To exist means literally 'to stand out' or 'to step or stride out' [ek = out; sistere = step]. Out of what? To exist is to step out of what is, out of what is given, out of the present — into the future, into the other, into the new. This typifies man, say the existentialists.

A human being is more

Things, plants and animals do not exist in this sense. They are what they are. They are part of their environment, and this is all they are. A cow is merely a part of nature. A human being is more. He is also part of nature, of course. He is a mammal. This is obvious when we see the body of a dead person. He is a handful of dirt, of earth. But this is not all that he is.

Man can take a distance from himself; he can stand over against the surrounding world. He can step outside of nature. He can even

grasp things, change them and transform them. This capacity is the root of culture. In culture man grasps what is given and re-creates it.

How far does this stepping-out extend? Some limit it to the social dimension. They are 'progressive'; they attack the social, economic and political situation to change it. To bring about a revolution.

Existence goes much deeper

But if we limit our grasp of existence to this dimension, we are being awfully bourgeois. Existence goes much deeper than this. It does not just touch his social context or his cultural possibilities. Existence and time are closely intertwined. Man steps out of one moment and into the next and so on till the end. So one philosopher calls ours a being-toward-death. That's where it all leads, this stepping out of one moment into the next.

Can we, must we step out of everything? And if we do, don't we then step into the polar opposite of the 'all' — that is, into nothingness? Can we, must we step out of our very selves? This is the critical question. What do we step into when we do so?

These questions [posed by philosophers in the second half of the 20th century,] are still with us today. They have permeated literature and the arts. But the Christian faith, too, has always taken these issues seriously, not just the questions but also the realities. It has always recognized that man is a creature, a creature-in-time. It has also always known about human freedom, that man is an acting, responsible creature. So it has not just taken the *ek-sistential* nature of man seriously but understood it more radically: man not only can and must step out of the world of things, he must also step out of himself.

However, the Christian faith has always added that he does not step into nothingness, into a bottomless abyss, but into the presence of his Creator.

This standing-before-the-Creator does have an element of nothingness about it. In a certain sense, it is a vacuum, an awesome emptiness. Isn't the Creator in his essence incomprehensible, ineffable, an emptiness from the creature's point of view? Man can only stand before his Creator, at most he can stand in relationship to him, but he can never comprehend this relationship, because he cannot grasp the other pole, much less

understand or fathom it. However, this relationship holds us up. We stand over the abyss of nothingness. In it we experience, as it were, anew and ever again the creation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, from which the Creator called us into being before his face.

Transcendence

This form of existence we might also define as transcendence, which means to rise above. A better translation is to cross a boundary, as long as this is not taken vertically, but horizontally. If we conceive of transcendence vertically, it implies to rise above the nature of our creatureliness toward the being of God. We want to 'see' God, or in some cases to become united with him, to be absorbed by him.

But it is better to conceive of transcendence in horizontal terms. Then it means to stride over the boundaries of our isolated, self-enclosed lives to enter into the presence of God. In this way we remain at our own level, wholly creature. The movement that takes place is solely horizontal. Only the relationship in which we stand is vertical: we stand in relation to God. This stress on the horizontal nature of human transcendence is essential to the Christian faith and has been especially underlined by Reformed Christianity.

To cross the boundary and to enter into the presence of God is the function and the position of man in the whole of created reality. Man cannot be understood as the goal of everything. Seen biblically, man can only be understood as the summing up of all created reality from pebble to angel, its representative and its voice. It is in the name of all creatures that he steps before the face of the Creator to answer to him, that is, to utter the words the Creator himself spoke. The words God spoke are all things, all creatures that are and everything that happens, all history.

Everything in our lives is service to God, neighbors

Here is my thesis: all this we experience to the full only when we also go to church. Going to church is the plastic representation of the *ek-sisting* and transcending nature of human life.

It is true that we stand in the presence of God across the board



A human being must also step out of his house and into the house of God. Only then do you fully exist.

SKJOLD PHOTOGRAPHS

— whether standing over the stove or digging up potatoes or hurtling across the sky in a jet — everything in our lives is service to our neighbors and service to God. In fact, not just existence (of man) but also being (of the world) stands before the face of the Creator. Every single thing, every creature is holy. It is a work, deed, word of the Creator. The world is the glory of God, and man is busy to increase that glory.

However, what is true across the board, receives a unique, separate and special embodiment in the worship service. The liturgy is the plastic representation of the holiness of being as it rests in God and of human existence as it acts. Without this plastic representation we would soon forget that holiness. We would slouch into being and shuffle through existence. The essence of things must also appear in a unique dimension.

That's why there is the sacred and why it can't be reduced to anything else. It does not stand over against the profane. That would be impossible, for it is the sacral dimension of the profane. But it does stand in distinction from the profane. What occurs inwardly in the heart of a believer as he digs up potatoes in his garden, namely — how awesome, holy and beautiful! — that he does so in the presence of God, this also seeks an outward, unique embodiment of its own. That's why the potato grower goes to church when it's time.

Stepping into the house of God

In other words, a human being must also step out of his house and into the house of God. Only then do you fully exist. That doesn't happen when you leave your house to go to the stadium, the theatre, school, or workplace. These are, in a manner of speaking, large extensions of your own house. But you must also enter the church. It is the house of God, and that's why it isn't something built by yourself.

In short, to genuinely be yourself, that is, a stepping-out and boundary-crossing creature, you have to also step out of yourself and cross your own boundaries. Unless a person goes to church, he is not entirely himself and his life is not complete. The completion given by going to church, however, is not a rounding off or closure of life; it is actually an opening up and disclosure of it.

This subject can also be approached from a wholly different direction. There is an older meaning of existence, a meaning that used to be the standard one. It begins from exactly the opposite end. Existence, then, is not stepping out of what is in the direction of nothingness. On the contrary, it is a stepping out of nothingness into what is. This is not purely our own deed; rather, it is a being called out. The Creator called us to step out of nothingness into being. That's why we are here. To exist is simply to be.

Christian Living/Family

This does not mean that nothingness is left wholly behind. We should translate "creatio ex nihilo" not as "creation from nothingness," for this sounds as though that nothingness is still something. We should translate it as "creation out of nothing," that is, not out of anything at all.

Life is a gift

This removes any negative connotations from what is. There is nothing evil about reality as such. It is the given — in the literal sense of the word: it is a gift. This is true of being in its entirety and also of existence in its entirety. The world is a gift, and life is a gift.

To exist simply means to be. This, of course, also means to be as an acting being. It continues through thousands of changes, stepping-out, stepping-across, through nothingness. Through everything and across everything, we continue to be. This second meaning of the word existence then becomes the essential meaning, while

the first — to step out or across — becomes secondary, accidental.

The Creator called his creation into being out of nothing, that is, he set it before his face, in his presence. He holds it permanently in his hands. It is carried forward from moment to moment by the power of his Word.

That's how we stand. That's how we are. And that's why we ought to think about God a lot. Only then do we begin to realize that we are genuinely here and what that means.

We only fully become conscious of the full reality of created reality when we think of the Creator. The origin of our being-here is not nothingness but God, or at least his act, his will, his decision. Therefore, our reality is authentic reality. It is not divine. Nor is it meaningless or evil. It is created, creaturely reality. In short, we are legitimately here.

Why are we here, for what purpose? We are here only because of the freedom and the goodness of

our Creator. It pleased him in his freedom to call us into being, and that's why our existence pleases him. He enjoys it. This freedom is not pure arbitrariness, however; it is also out of his goodness that he created us. He grants the pleasure of being to us as well, and that's why we, too, may enjoy it.

We only begin to realize this, as I said, when we think about God. The fundamental question is this: how do we experience the world and ourselves, how do we feel about being here? The Bible has taught us to give the above answers to this question. To be a Christian is a very specific way of being-in-the-world, not just morally, but ontologically, on the level of being.

Seen in this way, the world and life are a gift of God. This is even more amazing than that we are ek-sisting beings. The fact that we are simply here is the most amazing, most wonderful thing of all. And we realize this only if we think of God a lot.

This thinking of God must also get plastic form — in going to church. Going to church is a bodily, public, open way of thinking of God and of realizing that we are here and what that means.

Wholly into the presence of God

In church we step wholly into the presence of God. This "wholly" has four elements.

First, when we go to church, we don't just stand before God as a matter of fact, as we do everywhere in life, but we do so consciously and willingly for all to see.

Second, when we go to church, we don't leave our daily, ordinary life behind, but we bring it with us — all our cares, our joys, our desires, our sorrows, our goods, our needs.

Third, when we go to church, we step before our Creator almost immediately and unmediatedly. This doesn't happen completely, of course. Not just because in our liturgies we need the elements and

symbols borrowed from the outside world. Not just because we never leave behind our bodiliness and should not wish to do so either. But because we can never step immediately and unmediatedly before the Creator since we do so in our inextinguishable selfhood. We go to church together with others, in a fellowship oriented wholly to God our Creator.

Fourth, we step wholly before our Creator, because in this separate, sacred space of the worship service we do so publicly, leaving behind all anonymity, no longer remaining purely alone in our inwardness.

So we experience existence to the full and exist wholly, totally only when we go to church and make regular church attendance part of our lifestyle. Only then are we fully here. Only then do we fully step out and over the boundaries to exist before the face of God.

Families can do much to protect Earth's resources

Lisa M. Petsche

One of the best things about summer is spending lots of time outdoors.

My family has been enjoying eating on the patio, gardening, visiting local parks, going to the beach, playing soccer, picnicking, hiking, cycling, attending outdoor concerts and festivals, studying the night sky and vacationing in cottage country. Other families might include boating or camping on their list.

We've also been enjoying the many fresh flowers, fruits and vegetables that are available locally, some from our own garden.

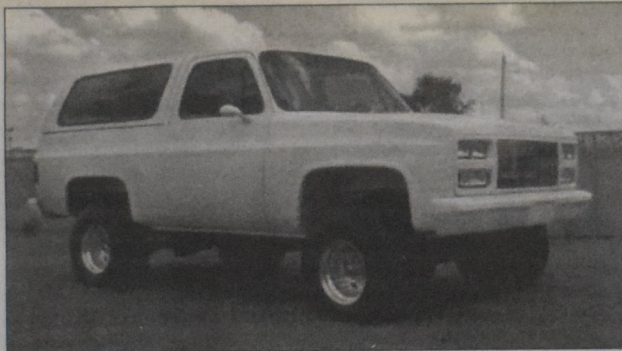
Refreshing us spiritually

All of this "getting back to nature" refreshes us spiritually and heightens our appreciation of Earth's resources.

What better time to reflect upon how we, as families, can help protect these sacred treasures God has entrusted to us, especially in light of the growing ecological crisis?

While industry is a big offender when it comes to pollution, individuals also do much to harm this planet. In fact, researchers have calculated that if everyone on Earth consumed as much as the average Canadian, three additional planets would be required to produce the necessary resources and absorb the pollution.

Sister Paula Gonzalez, a North



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When buying a new vehicle, make fuel efficiency a high priority (scratch that SUV off your list).

American futurist and environmentalist whom I recently had the chance to meet, urges us to think of Earth's precious, finite resources as life support systems and practise CPR — conservation, preservation and reservation.

Critically examining our patterns of consumption — which most of us don't give much thought to — is the first step. For instance, how much garbage do we place curbside each week? Could any of it be reused, recycled or composted? How many cups of coffee in throwaway cups do we buy in an average week? What about fast food?

It's time for us to acknowledge that our lifestyle choices, including housing, transportation, food, and

energy and water consumption, have a significant impact on our environment. A change in habits must follow.

Start with transportation

Since driving motor vehicles accounts for more air pollution than any other human activity, transportation is a good place to start. Try reducing your family's vehicle dependence by walking, cycling, using public transit or carpooling more. Consider giving up that second car (my husband and I did so several years ago and have no regrets).

To decrease the environmental impact of your vehicle, plan ahead to combine several errands in one outing; practise energy-efficient

driving habits; avoid voluntarily idling (this means no more drive-through banking or food purchasing); and follow the maintenance instructions in your owner's manual. When buying a new vehicle, make fuel efficiency a high priority (scratch that SUV off your list) and rethink extras like power seats, windows and mirrors, air conditioning, four-wheel drive and sun roofs, which all add to fuel consumption.

Eco-friendly suggestions

Following are some more eco-friendly suggestions:

- Repair rather than replace.
- Buy second-hand, via consignment stores, thrift shops, yard sales or classified ads.
- Never throw out anything unwanted that's still useful — sell it or give it away.
- Refuse to buy heavily packaged goods.
- Provide drinks in reusable or recyclable containers, rather than throwaway boxes, for picnics, sporting events and school lunches.
- Teach your children that all littering and dumping is unacceptable, and be a good role model.
- Seek ways to improve energy efficiency within your home. (Utility companies and the Internet are good sources of tips.)
- Get a composter and educate yourself on how to use it properly.
- Plant a tree or a garden for

which the whole family shares responsibility.

- Teach your children to appreciate and respect green spaces.
- Join community groups concerned about industrial pollution or proposed development of natural areas.
- Demand ecological accountability from businesses and eco-friendly policies from all levels of government. (Recently I wrote a letter to the Minister of Environment and Energy regarding coal-burning electricity plants, which are terrible polluters.)

We have an obligation

Without question we all have a role to play — moreover, an obligation — to help heal Earth. While whatever we choose to do towards this end might seem small-scale, our actions can, in fact, make a difference.

Furthermore, living lightly not only helps ensure the viability of our planet, it's also good for our mental health and for our souls (not to mention the family budget). It helps us to focus on what's really important — the things money can't buy — and to live in harmony with all of creation, the way God intended.

Lisa M. Petsche is a mother of three and freelance writer in Stoney Creek, Ont.

Reconciliation

Conferees challenged to be 'ambassadors of reconciliation' in a swiftly changing world

Harry der Nederlanden

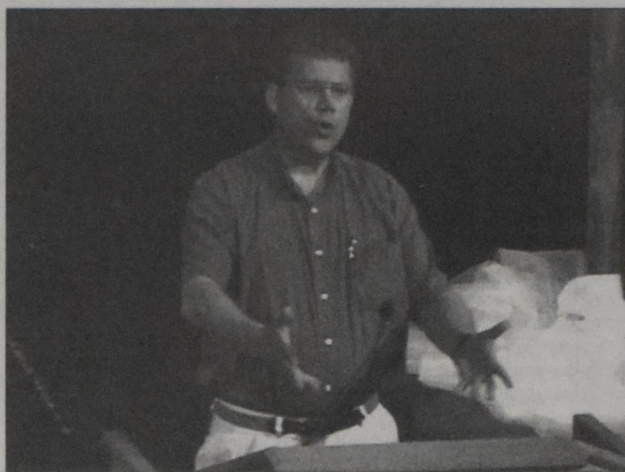
It has been a while since I've been able to attend one of the ICS conferences in Ontario. Not since they stopped having them along the Niagara River. Although I've never owned camping equipment and so have never stayed overnight, I do vividly recall exciting discussions around campfires and cooking stoves.

One of the conferences in Alberta is memorable for me because I attended one day of lectures with my father, who was by then into his 70s, and he loved it. It reminded him of youth rallies he attended in the Netherlands. I remember it, too, because I didn't take a jacket and, sitting in the unenclosed building, I shivered non-stop for the first couple of hours.

Widened horizons, deepened vision

Although I recall some of the speakers from various conferences and even some of the speeches, what I remember most is the visceral high I carried away from them – the sense of widened horizons, the deepened vision of the fabulous scope of the Kingdom of God, the feeling of having your lungs pumped full of oxygen and being infused to go the distance. A good ICS conference is like climbing a mountain: you have to put in some effort and struggle through some dense underbrush, but the view from the top is worth it.

On the first morning of this one, a perfect August day, as we trailed outdoors toward the coffee cart still discussing John Suk's impressive speech, I spied a column of conferees coming around the far corner into the courtyard carrying ten-foot reeds like shepherd's staves, the small plumes at the top nodding in



PHOTOS (3) COURTESY INSTITUTE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

John Suk speaks at the ICS conference on reconciliation, held in late August on the campus of Redeemer University College in Ancaster, Ont.

the breeze. Robert Farrar Capon! The name popped into my head immediately. Near the beginning of one of his many splendid books Capon describes himself walking through town carrying one of the towering reeds to make a point about the deep connection between human nature and nature. The image, lodged deep in memory, seemed suddenly to have come to life.

It also brought back as if it were yesterday another conference at which one of the speakers, Jim Skillen, now the director of the Center for Public Justice in Washington, gave a speech focusing on one of Capon's first books: *The Supper of the Lamb*. The latter was a combination cookbook-celebration of creation; in other words, a concrete demonstration of Kuyper's theme that nothing, not even cooking and eating, falls outside the scope of the Kingdom. I was

still a student then, scheming with a few others how to get some of this 'good reformational stuff' translated into Spanish and circulating among Latin American students.

Student radicals now the middle-aged establishment

In those days the conferees were about 70 per cent students. Now they are about 70 per cent people my age, well into their 50s. The student radicals have become the middle-aged establishment. I looked around and was startled to find all us young guys and gals looking so grey and wrinkled on the outside. But as long as your heart is open to the new thing that the Spirit is working in God's glorious creation, you don't feel that you've aged all that much.

You are a supple reed dancing in the breeze, sucking up the juices of life through your roots.

Oh, by the way, the reed carriers were not acolytes of some weird sect; they were part of John Wood's workshop, which stressed that reconciliation – the theme of this year's conference, held at Redeemer College – is not just between man and God or man and man but also between man and nature.

This year the conference was sponsored jointly by the ICS and the *Banner*, and John Suk, the editor of the *Banner*, and George Vandeveld, Professor of Systematic Theology at the ICS gave the keynote speeches. But there were also oodles of workshops every bit as informative and inspiring as the main speeches. Saturday afternoon, I too joined the silly folk and marched around the Redeemer campus carrying a 10-foot reed.

And snapping pictures. Or actually just snapping. When I picked up my film from developing a few days later, there were no pictures. Not a one. Goes to remind you that the demons come to conferences, too.

Reconciliation and contemporary culture

In the first keynote speech, "Reconciliation and Contemporary Culture," John Suk described some new characteristics of our media-saturated age that distinguishes it from the one that preceded it. He divided history into three stages: an oral stage in which people had to rely mainly on memory to pass along stories and traditions; a literate stage, which introduced writing to aid memory and to a great degree displaced it; and our era, which Walter Ong described in terms of secondary orality. The latter is not a return to an actual oral tradition because, of course, people still know how to read. Our age is dubbed as more oral than literate because people are turning away from the printed word as their primary way of receiving information and reflecting on it and are depending more and more on other media such as film, television, videos and the computer.

This is not just an interesting trend in our use of technology, argues Suk, drawing on the work of Walter Ong, Sven Birkerts and many others, but a profound change in the very structure of how our senses and our minds work. Ong continues the tradition of Marshall McLuhan, who argued that a technology such as writing, did not just give us another tool leaving us unchanged, but that it effected deep changes in the way we understand ourselves, our world and our history.

Change happened almost overnight

Birkerts, in *The Gutenberg Elegies*, calls this a break in historical continuity so radical that it "has rendered a vast part of our cultural heritage alien" to the latest generations. Yes, there have been incremental changes in previous eras, he admits, but this change happened almost overnight, from a historical perspective, and it is a monumental and a permanent turn.

"Since World War II," he writes, "we have stepped, collectively, out of an ancient and familiar solitude and into an enormous web of imponderable linkages. We have created the technology that not only enables us to change our basic na-

ture, but that is making such change all but inevitable."

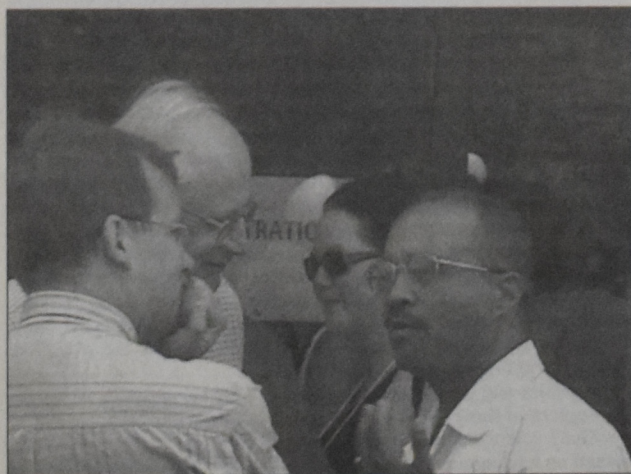
Bigger-than-life heroes

In ancient oral cultures, we see a heavy dependence on the use of bigger-than-life heroes around which to build stories and myths. To help keep these stories in memory, storytellers relied on poetic formulas that would be considered clichés in a literary culture, and the conflict in such stories were usually drawn in terms of black-and-white, good-versus-evil. Such stories served for the most part to conserve and perpetuate the order and values of the society in which they were born.

The invention of writing eventually changed this way of conceiving ourselves in time. As writing became more established, the main character in the stories we tell became more and more ordinary until today he is often not even exemplary, but a stumblebum, a failure, a rascal or worse. This means, among other things, that we take some distance from the main character, we view him (and ourselves) ironically. While the drama and conflict of oral stories tended to be quite straightforward and outward, narrative in the age of the book turned inward, conflicts became subtle and plots complicated and psychological.

The stories we now see in film and television, and increasingly in the novel too as it begins to imitate the film, are more like those told in preliterate cultures. Just as the ancients needed agonistic heroes, so those who have developed their way of seeing reality in the age of secondary orality also need heroes and black/white conflicts. Secondary orality, explained Suk, tends to extreme conservatism and right-wing politics. Because it weans us away from the literate sources that have enabled complex, independent analysis and reflection, the culture of secondary orality is anxious to preserve existing structures; it also allows its opinions and views to be shaped by the media, which in turn are in the hands of the rich and the powerful. The entire world of media, thus, tends to affirm Western wealth and privilege.

The change Suk describes is, therefore, not just a shift in our use of leisure time, a switch, for example, from reading novels for entertainment to going to the movies. This is just part of a transformation that is total, affecting our politics as well as our worship and our faith lives. If secondary orality fosters political helplessness in society at



Participants engage in discussions at the ICS conference.

Reconciliation/Environment

large, it does the same thing in the church and in the way we express our citizenship in the Kingdom, for Christians are not immune to this culture shift.

Distancing ourselves from secular culture

Suk pointed to the influence of the *Left Behind* series of books and their apocalypticism as a sign that Evangelicals are embracing an attitude of self-marginalization. Distancing ourselves from our secular, humanist culture, we look to a *deus ex machina*, a supernatural being who intervenes miraculously at the critical moment, to rescue us from a world gone to the devil. Many Christians seem also to be attracted to charismatic leaders, so they don't have to think things through for themselves. These were cited as evidence that orality is having a great impact on the Christian community as well.

To empower ourselves as 'am-

bassadors of reconciliation' (the theme of the conference), Suk stressed that Christians must continue to pursue literacy as a great value if they are to provide leadership in this age. Although people are becoming increasingly dependent on non-literate media, the leaders and shapers of these media are highly literate people.

He also counseled his audience to avail themselves of a host of alternate sources so as not to be swayed by black-and-white world-views.

"If you don't read biblically informed opinion," he warned, "you will go along with public opinion."

One of the most powerful weapons against the rule of the media, Suk pointed out, is the pulpit. It is still one of the remaining places where people accept a voice of authority. However, to make themselves understood in this age, ministers can no longer preach in the highly literate style descended

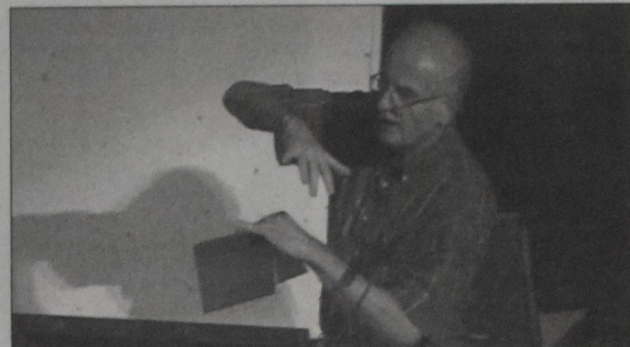
from the Reformation.

Although we need the gifts of deep literacy, concluded Suk, we must also master the techniques of the new media.

Importance of ecumenicity

George Vandervelde, Professor of Systematic Theology at the ICS, gave the second keynote address and he spoke on the importance of ecumenicity to the church in our calling to be ambassador of reconciliation. The business of reconciling human beings and God, on the one hand, and human beings with each other, on the other hand, cannot be separated, Vandervelde explained. Take the story of the prodigal son. It is often read as a parable highlighting the reconciliation between father (God) and the wayward son (humanity); however, Jesus tells the story to explain why he hangs around with the wrong people.

In the letters of Paul, too,



George Vandervelde: The heart of reconciliation is forgiveness.

reconciliation is conceived as the creation of a new community that brings together those who were formerly at odds: Jews and gentiles were reconciled. This was not just a side-product to being church but at the centre of its calling.

The heart of reconciliation is forgiveness, for it is sin that keeps us apart. And the power to forgive sins was passed from Jesus Christ to his church when he commissioned his Apostles. If the church is called to be the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, the temple of the Spirit, this means it is called to be one. It is to be the new humanity, so the unity is intrinsic.

Normalizing brokenness

This means, insisted Vandervelde, that what we have now cannot be the church, for it is riddled with division. What we have is denominations, not churches.

To deny this is to normalize brokenness.

We normalize brokenness when we verticalize reconciliation, seeing it first of all as a healing of our alienation from God. Or when we see it as a two-step process: first with God and then with one another. But the Bible speaks of one new humanity, one city of God, one nation. John dedicates an entire letter against separating the love of God from love of neighbor. We are reconciled, says John, in and through community.

We have never known anything other than plurality, Vandervelde pointed out, and therefore we begin to think of it as normal. But the status quo may not be an option for the church of Christ. The church must be an agent of reconciliation.

The visible/invisible distinction is untenable. In his prayer for the church's unity — "that they may be one" — Jesus stresses that this unity is for the sake of the world. So it is a unity that has to be seen.

By using an exercise in which the audience tried to arrange

denominations in concentric rings of closeness to the CRC, Vandervelde pointed out that this is the way we conceived ecumenicity, by establishing ties with those most like ourselves. This denomination centered approach, puts ourselves at the centre. Our own tradition becomes the standard by which we measure everyone else. However, when we put Christ at the center, we hesitate to say that our own denomination is closest.

Overview of ecumenical ventures

Vandervelde concluded with a quick overview of ecumenical ventures and strategies, first on the global and national level and then on the local level. He distinguished full communion agreements, dialogues (such as between the World Evangelical Alliance and the Catholic Church, between the Lutherans and the Roman Catholics on justification, and between the CRC and the Roman Catholics on the theology of the mass), and global forums. On the local level, he mentioned joint evangelism, discussion groups using the confessions, the week of prayer for Christian unity, joint worship services, church twinning within the same town.

The crystallization point of reconciliation, he concluded is the Lord's Supper. There the unity of the body of Christ is demonstrated very concretely.

I've given you a flavor of what goes on at these conferences, but only a flavor. I'd love to tell you about the workshop on reconciliation at the level of personal relationships conducted by John Olthuis, or what John Wood did with his silly parade of reed-carrying folk, or what Jim Payton experienced in Macedonia. You missed a lot by not being there. Next year, when you read the dates for the ICS conference announced in CC, mark them on your calendar. Enrich your summer.

Networking project explores place of humans in creation

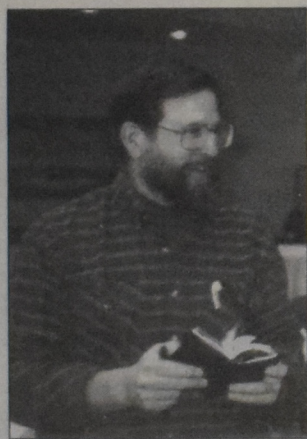
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Christian community, of understanding humans as placed simultaneously within societal structures and within nature, in a way that neither negates the uniqueness of humans, created in the image of God, nor denigrates the value of God's creation. The challenge is the full integration of humans, society, and nature into the vision of *shalom* that God intends — an integration that is crucial for our decisions on how to structure our lives in relation to God's good Earth."

This seminar is open to faculty at colleges, universities, and seminaries, as well as advanced graduate students, and environmental practitioners.

While much of Christian environmentalism has been theological in tone, "one notion that hasn't been worked out is that humans are part of an ecosystem," says Wood. "We aren't diminishing human uniqueness.... We're saying boundaries are how we define ourselves."

Besides next summer's seminar, Wood and his colleagues are planning two major meetings for 2004. The team will be involved with that year's Faith and Earthkeeping conference, and with a joint meeting of the American Scientific Affiliation and the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation, to be held at



LINDA SIEBENGA

CC columnist John Wood

Trinity-Western University (in Langley, B.C.) next year.

Exploring shalom

Bouma-Prediger, one of Wood's colleagues, explains, "I was drawn in as a humanities person." He and the others met for a week this past June at Calvin College to further plan out their project. "Boundary issues came up in our conversations repeatedly [as] an overarching theme," he observes. That is reflected in the title of next summer's seminar, and in the provisional title of a book — "With/Out Boundaries" — which

the team of scholars plans to write together, reports Bouma-Prediger.

The place of humans within creation has not been examined thoroughly enough, asserts Bouma-Prediger, who asks, "How do we think of ourselves as human in light of what secular and humanist evolutionary biologists are saying? Are we separate from other creatures? How do we envision ourselves as part of God's good earth?"

Reflecting on that question, he says: "We're earth creatures made in God's image.... that's our uniqueness.... We're embedded in creation."

Many people resist the notion that people are creatures, he notes. Such people draw a boundary between human and nonhuman creatures.

Expanding on the concept of "shalom" mentioned in next year's seminar description, Bouma-Prediger defines shalom as "people having their basic needs met, having shelter, adequate food, water. Sustenance rights are respected." This refers to "not just people in North America, but people on the edge — on the margins."

Shalom also "encourages the flourishing of natural communities. God's desire is that those natural systems flourish for their own sakes."

Parenting

Overwhelmed again?

Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

Late one night when my first child Rachel was a few days old, I paced the kitchen floor with her cradled in my arms. Nothing I did calmed her crying. Exhausted from giving birth, I longed to sleep. Soon my weeping combined with hers, and I lamented, "Life will never be the same!" Many times since, in different ways and degrees, I've felt overwhelmed by my parenting responsibilities.

One of the best antidotes, I've discovered, is to take stock of the reasons for my emotions. When I understand causes, I can seek remedies.

What are some of the reasons parents feel overwhelmed, and what can they do about it?

Taking care of young children is physically draining. Because of feedings, soiled diapers, sickness, and nightmares, parents are often up with their children through the night, losing precious sleep. Tired, they quickly become frustrated, irritable, and disheartened.

Creative planning

Through creative planning parents can take steps to get more sleep. Moms and dads can alternate getting up, either taking turns on the same night or on alternate nights. Or they can each take responsibility for a different child. When I breast-fed my baby at night, my husband took care of the other children who woke up. We also took turns sleeping longer on



NEWS CANADA

Recognize when the snowball of chaos and disorganization starts to roll clumsily down the slope of your life incorporating everything in its hungry path. Don't let it keep rolling. Take action!

Saturday and Sunday mornings, when the children rose especially early.

In your situation, what steps can you take to get more rest, to have a more positive parenting experience?

As children mature, parents may feel overwhelmed when they compare their kids to other children who seem to act more responsibly and lovingly. "What's wrong with us?" they wonder. "We're

trying our best. Why do our kids constantly bicker? Why does our son incessantly lose his belongings? Why does our child spread hurtful rumors about his peers? And why does our daughter speak disrespectfully to her teacher?"

Why compare kids with others?

In order to stop feeling overwhelmed by comparisons, we need to ask, "Why do I compare my kids to others?" Usually our pride is at stake. We want our kids to look good and be good. But we need to remember that "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3:23). Our children are sinners saved by grace, as are other people's kids. Other families may seem perfect, but they have struggles that we know nothing about.

Rather than make comparisons, we need to look at our families realistically, seeing our strengths and weaknesses, and set spiritual goals for renewal and growth. Those goals can include any action that encourages family members to treat each other as image-bearers of Christ.

Overwhelmed by guilt

As parents, we are sometimes overwhelmed by guilt because of sins we've committed against our children. We identify with the psalmist's words, "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear" (Psalm 38:4). Perhaps we've been too critical or we've expected our kids to be what they are not, trying to shape them in our image or the image of someone

we admire. Perhaps we failed to give leadership, to say no when that is precisely what our kids needed to hear even though it wouldn't have been popular with their peers or other parents. Maybe we gave our children too many material things, to their spiritual detriment, and taught them to love objects more than compassion, justice, and mercy.

Whatever the reason for our guilt, it hampers effective parenting. The psalmist David points out a path to healing: "When we were overwhelmed by sins, you forgave our transgressions" (Psalm 65:3). He helps us understand that when we sin against our kids, we sin against God. But thank God, he forgives! Saying sorry to him and to our kids lifts a burden from us, and re-energizes us in our parenting task.

In order to remain energetic, it's crucial to take practical steps to prevent becoming overwhelmed.

Drawing strength and wisdom from God

First, draw your strength each day from the perfect parent, our Father in heaven. Ask him to give you wisdom and discernment to fulfil your parenting task. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." Parents who are saturated with God's wisdom will experience victory over feeling overwhelmed and defeated.

Second, remain organized. Any mother who has searched frantically for her daughter's homework, stray socks, snow pants, or pizza

money just when the bus is about to arrive knows the sweaty-palm feeling of being overwhelmed by parenting. Any father, standing in line at the library with his kids, arms full of books, knows the connection between being disorganized and feeling overwhelmed when he realizes he's misplaced the library cards again.

The snowball of chaos

Recognize when the snowball of chaos and disorganization starts to roll clumsily down the slope of your life incorporating everything in its hungry path. Don't let it keep rolling. Take action! For example, if you're a morning person, get up before your family does and prepare for the daybreak rush. If you're an evening person, before you go to bed organize what your family will need the next morning.

Third, be aware of how stress in other areas of your life can make you feel overwhelmed and sabotage effective parenting. How do you greet your kids when you come home from work after your boss has unfairly criticized you? How do you respond to your son's request for new shoes on the day you backed into your neighbor's car? How do you react to your daughter's poor report card when you just quarreled with your spouse? Keep a finger on the pulse of your personal anxiety and don't allow it to negatively influence your parenting task.

Consider the impact

Fourth, when making decisions about becoming a volunteer or participating in other activities, consider the impact it will have on each family member and on your role as a parent. Ask yourself, "If I agree to serve on the PTA, the church council, and the bazaar committee, will I have any energy left at night to help my kids with their homework? Will my spouse be home most of the evenings that I am away so at least one of us can give the children attention? Will my spouse and I have enough time together to discuss our children's needs?"

No matter what positive steps we take to avoid becoming overwhelmed as parents, we'll experience days when we want to cave in. The psalmist David said, "From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). God, our rock, listens to parents' pleas for help. After all, the children we're caring for aren't ours. They are his.

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News/Sports

Bruin Romkes Camminga (1723-1820), first Reformed minister ordained in Canada

Gerry Gerrits

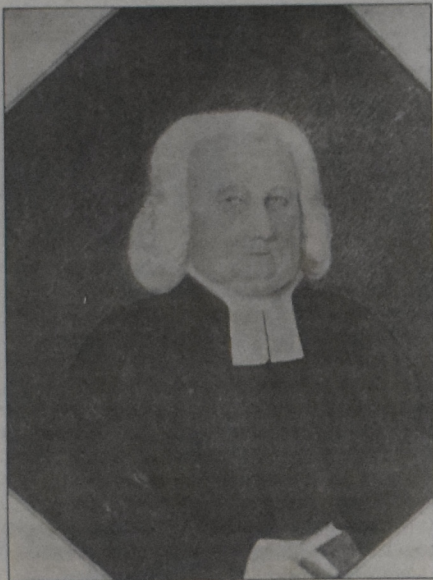
It is perhaps a little known fact, even amongst Dutch-Canadians in this country, that the first Reformed minister ordained in Canada was a native of the Netherlands whose ordination took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia, in 1770. He was Bruin Romkes, born in Leeuwarden in 1723, and there are indications that it was not until after his arrival in Nova Scotia in 1751 that he adopted the surname Camminga.

How did this come about?

However, because of phonetics Camminga soon became Comingo, or Commingoe, and it is under the name Comingo that we find a brief entry devoted to him in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. His ordination took place at the request of the German Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg, and he was their first ordained minister, serving them for nearly 50 years in their own language. So how did all of this come about?

Between 1604 and 1713, the area known as Acadia to the French and as Nova Scotia to the English after 1621 passed back and forth between England and France a total of five times, with England acquiring what turned out to be permanent ownership by the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). Nova Scotia at the time also included present-day New Brunswick, as well as eastern Maine as far as the Penobscot River, but it did not include Cape Breton Island. Following 1713, the French built the fortress of Louisbourg on Cape Breton Island, the largest fortress ever constructed in North America, in order to control access to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, and it was to offset the threat posed by Louisbourg that the British founded Halifax, with its Citadel, in 1749.

For the settlement of Halifax, and the rest of the province, Governor Edward Cornwallis brought over English settlers, many of them from the slums of London. But since these did not live up to expectations, Cornwallis decided to recruit so-called "foreign Protestants" from Europe, a practice that had already been pursued successfully earlier in the century for the settlement of other English colonies in North America. By the end of 1752 some nine hundred families had arrived in Halifax, comprising some 2,450 individuals. Of these 900 families, about 600 came from Germany, 135 from Montbéliard in northeastern France, 120 from Switzerland, and somewhere between 15 and 20



COURTESY GERRY GERRITS

A portrait of Bruin Romkes Camminga

from the Netherlands, most of them from the provinces of Groningen and Friesland. The "foreign Protestants" arrived on twelve ships, ten of which sailed directly from Rotterdam and the other two from London.

'Foreign Protestants' settled in Lunenburg

In 1753, most of the "foreign Protestants" from Germany and Montbéliard left Halifax and founded a settlement of their own, namely Lunenburg, situated some distance down the coast from Halifax. Records indicate that at least two of the Dutch natives joined them there. The first of these was someone called Van der Heide, a well educated and capable individual, according to a letter from Colonel Charles Lawrence to the colonial governor. However, Van der Heide, spelled Vanderhyde by Lawrence, does not appear to have remained in Lunenburg for long. The second of the Dutch immigrants, known as planters at the time, to join the settlers in Lunenburg was Bruin Romkes Camminga. He was a wool-comber by trade, and it has been suggested that it was on account of his occupation that he called himself Camminga following his arrival in Nova Scotia.

When Camminga arrived in Halifax on the *Speedwell* in 1751, he was married and may have had one or more children. However, by the time he settled in Lunenburg two years later, his wife had died, and in September of 1753 he married Renée Des Camps. Like all the

settlers, Camminga received a grant of land in Lunenburg, but he also took up fishing as all those settling in Lunenburg were soon compelled to do. Following the founding of Chester in 1760, Camminga and his family moved there for unknown reasons. Here he engaged primarily in fishing, and it was also here that he prepared himself for the ministry under the tutelage of Reverend John Seccombe, the Congregationalist minister in Chester.

In July of 1770 Camminga was ordained minister of the Reformed Prot-

estants in Lunenburg — *Hochdeutsch Reformierten Gemeinde zu Lunenburg*, erroneously called the Dutch Reformed Church in many works. If it had been a Dutch Reformed Church, it would, one assumes, have been called *Niederdeutsch Reformierten Gemeinde*. There were some sixty Reformed Protestant families in Lunenburg, and it would appear that following the founding of the town in 1753 they created their own congregation, albeit an informal one, for it was not until 1759 that Protestant dissenters in Nova Scotia, including the Reformed Protestants, were formally granted full freedom of worship. Until that time, all Protestant dissenters were, in theory at least, expected to attend Church of England worship services.

The direct descendant

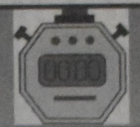
After being granted freedom of worship, the Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg were given restricted use of St. John's Anglican Church, but that situation was found to be unsatisfactory. Consequently, in 1769 they erected their own church building on the site now occupied by St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, the direct descendant of the *Hochdeutsch Reformierten Gemeinde zu Lunenburg*.

Although the Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg now had their own church facilities, they still did not have their own pastor, and in fact had never had one since their arrival in Lunenburg in 1753. During all those years the congregation

Continued on page 17...

After the Buzzer

Tim Antonides



Pilgrimage to the Ivy

The air is thick with hot dogs and onions and beer and popcorn and sweat. The guys in the upper bleachers on the left field side have CHICAGO CUBS scrawled in marker on their bellies. There's a brick wall behind home plate. The outfield fence is ivy, and a baseball will sometimes clear it and end up rolling down Waveland Avenue. At 88, it's the second oldest ballpark in the country (behind Fenway Park in Boston) and houses one of the losingest teams in professional sports. The natives speak baseball like nuttin' else. "Come on, throw da ball, ya bum!" Someone accidentally spills a big bag of caramel corn over two rows of people. No one seems to care.

Seen' da Cubs at Wrigley

Ah, Wrigley Field. What a place. The thing is — I've never been there. Yet it looms large in my mind. It has a persona. Monica and I are planning to go to a game this month (if there's no strike). It's one of the things I'm looking forward to most about living in Illinois. Seen' da Cubs at Wrigley. My perceptions of the place have come from a blend of t.v. sports highlights, magazine stories, personal conversations, and daydreams.

What's the big deal about a baseball stadium? Who cares about the Chicago Cubs and fat guys drinking Stroh's in the bleachers? I suppose the question of the day is, Why get all worked up about going to some dumb baseball game?

For the same reason many of us might dream of seeing the Taj Mahal or the hill towns of Tuscany. Romanticism. Baseball is a game of legacy, legend, and tradition. Wrigley Field is where Babe Ruth pointed to a bleacher location during Game 3 of the 1932 World Series and hit Charlie Root's next pitch for a homer. Wrigley Field is baseball. Gritty, gutsy, all-American, fresh-roasted baseball.

I have some of the same feelings about Madison Square Garden or Yankee Stadium. There are stories and memories there that I've visited in my head a hundred times. Maybe you know what I'm talking about. Or maybe you think I'm being silly. But think about your own romantic notions of places. Walking down Sunset Boulevard? Punting the canals of Venice? Standing at the exact spot where your great-grandfather went fishing every morning?

Pilgrims searching for tangible things

A lot of us enjoy chasing romantic ideas and seeing physical representations of them. We are dreamers. Pilgrims searching for tangible things that we hope will look the same as they have in our imaginations. I think it's one of life's pleasures. It's a gift from God to be able to wildly imagine things and then have the freedom to go and experience them.

I think about how much less often I dream of experiencing God in the same way. I would definitely love to go to the Holy Land and see the places where Christ walked, but I don't think I've spent much time imagining what he's really like and trying to feel his presence. Sometimes I imagine heaven and what eternal life will be like. I think about not having pain or anger or hatred, but I don't easily visualize a new heaven and a new earth. Yet that's the most beautiful thing imaginable. That's the most romantic thing possible. Christ and His bride.

We human beings are drawn to the physical and tangible. It's hard not to be. But maybe actively trying to visualize God's love and grace can help make our faith life more vibrant. Wrigley Fields are glorious, but we look forward to an ultimate conclusion that will be outrageously beautiful and unimaginably perfect.



Tim Antonides is a teacher and sports coach currently studying in Chicago, Illinois.

Opinion

Summertime empty pews



CHRISTIANCOURIERFILES

Morris N. Greidanus

Our church, First CRC of Grand Rapids, Michigan, made the *New York Times*!

In a July 13, 2002 story on summer church attendance in the *"Globe & Mail of the United States"* — two and one-half column inches — mentioned First CRC and quoted its pastor. The accompanying picture in the *New York* and *Net* editions was a view of the interior of the church, empty pews, five worshipers, and one preacher with the caption: "The Rev. Morris Greidanus preached to a sparse congregation at First Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Mich."

How the reporter came to put me in the company of an Episcopalian rector from Louisiana, a rabbi from Connecticut, a Baptist preacher from Denver, and a priest from Hyannis, Massachusetts where the Kennedy family worships, is interesting in itself. I received an e-mail from a *Times* reporter who wrote that she was doing a story on the summer decline in church attendance and that she would like to talk to me. I gave her a good time to call, which she did a number of times, on the phone and e-mail.

Voice of the Midwest

Apparently there is a web-site where reporters can post a story idea for which they need sources. Phil DeHaan (from Exeter, Ontario!), Calvin's director of media relations, saw this and listed Calvin's Institute of Christian Worship and his home church as possible sources. The reporter wanted a national story, so she

picked us for the Midwest.

I was pleased with her thoroughness. The CRC's and my name were spelled correctly, which is about the best you can hope for according to some folks. But she also visited our congregation's web site, engaged me in the development of the story, checked quotes carefully, sent a photographer to a service, and informed me when it would be in print. So that was a neat experience. Several friends noted the story and sent it to me, pleased that our denomination was included.

Why all the empty pews?

Now for the subject of the story: summer church attendance. Summertime empty pews are probably common in your church as well. I estimate that we are down to between half and two-thirds of normal attendance. Why? Many members are on vacation, others have cottages or are out camping, some run summer camps that take them away from the home church. The reporter asked if the summer slump was getting worse. I answered that in spite of a downturn in the economy, the slump seems to grow (be growing??) a bit. But I also recalled that when I served in Brampton, Ontario in the '70s a group of members went camping in Alliston almost every summer weekend. So it's not a new issue.

Her first take on the story was from a minister who was annoyed that his members were gone — "taking a vacation from God." I responded with the hymn line "This is my Father's world" and

the thought that it's a blessing for members when they can take a vacation and worship God where they find themselves on a Sunday.

She also wondered if in some ways the smaller crowd was more intimate. I found that to be true, especially when we move into a

different area than an empty church. Last summer our ceiling was under repair, so we met outside
Continued on page 17...

Reflections on Synod 2002 from a woman adviser

Building Trust
Vicky Van Andel Ed.



Jean Weening

For a week in June, I attended the synodical meeting of the Christian Reformed Church of North America which met at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. I had been invited as a Woman Adviser. This is the second year that women advisers were present at synod.

Fifty years ago my father, Herman Wierenga, attended synod as a delegate. My father died when I was very young. My mother, who is now in her eighties, remembered my father's opportunity and felt that it was quite a privilege for me to be able to attend this event this year. She phoned me the night before I left to let me know of her support and also to share her wisdom: "You will be blessed," she said and went on to suggest that perhaps I should not wear my shorts to the sessions.

Awkwardness and tokenism

I also received a telephone call from Peter Stellingwerff, a pastor in Classis Alberta South. He attended last year's synod, the first time that women were present as advisers. His words were encouraging to me, recognizing awkwardness of the position of a woman adviser, and also the somewhat tokenism of it as a solution to dealing with the role of women in the church.

Indeed, it was awkward, as was evidenced not only by the inequities in the numbers of delegates — there were 188 male delegates and seven woman advisers — but also in the actual physical separation between the male delegates and the advisers — the Ethnic, the faculty of Calvin Seminary and the Women Advisers. A fence, like you see in airports, ostensibly to insure the safety of the delegates, separated the advisers from the delegates. In the course of the week this fence was sometimes loosened, but for safety concerns was soon put back in place.

To me this fence became a symbol of the injustices of gender inequality within the Christian Reformed Church. Sitting several rows behind this fence and seeing this body of men as the official delegates, was unnerving. I wonder how long the CRC will not hear from half of its membership.

As women advisers we had a voice but not a vote. But to what should our voice be addressed? Should we speak only to issues that concern women in the church? Or should we offer our unique female voice on all issues before synod? I would like to think my voice is unique irrespective of gender. I would like to see a floor of synod delegates composed of males and females and of all ethnicities.

Particularly poignant issues

A couple of issues before synod were particularly poignant from a female point of view. Two overtures were before Synod asking that women be allowed to serve as synodical deputies. Synodical deputies are ministers nominated by each classis and appointed by Synod to act on behalf of Synod

between meetings.

These deputies may not serve in their own classis. Considering that there are very few women ministers, and that only 18 classes have declared the word "male" inoperative, it seemed to me that this should not be a major threat. And so I was very disappointed when after a lengthy debate, the delegates voted 115 to 68 not to allow women to serve as synodical deputies.

One of the delegates stated that when the road gets bumpy, we should slow down. One of the ethnic advisers wondered while talking to me on the side whether the first Dutch immigrants and founders of the Christian Reformed Church had slowed down when they hit some bumps on the road. I believe that it is high time women are appointed to positions in the church and that we are traveling far too slowly on the road. Sometimes I even think that we are creating the bumps. In his greetings, a fraternal delegate from Africa gently chastised the members of the synodical assembly by stating that there should be no discrimination in the church of either race or gender.

Voices of women glaringly absent

Synod 2002 urged churches to adopt a zero tolerance policy in cases of abuse. While the majority of the delegates favored such a policy, I found it disconcerting that 188 men debated this issue, when it is most frequently the women who are victims of abuse. The voices of women were glaringly absent in this discussion.

There were many additional significant discussions and decisions at Synod. These included how to provide pastoral care for homosexual members, the financial crunch the CRC finds itself in, and the Creeds of the church.

The report of the Board of Trustees contained a denominational ministries plan penned by Duane Kelderman. Every church member would gain from reading it. There were suggestions from the floor of synod that this report be published and be studied in our churches. This is an excellent document articulating the identity, mission and values of the CRC. [An earlier draft was published in CC last year in three parts.]

We joined the Multi-Ethnic Conference celebrating diversity and honoring ethnic pioneer leaders who have worked hard towards furthering the ministry of the CRC. Perhaps one day we will also honor the women pioneers, too, who work hard for gender equality in the CRC.

All in all, it was a good experience to attend Synod. Throughout the week of deliberations there were times of pain and times of laughter. There were occasions of celebration and worship. And I came away feeling blessed and hopeful that our God who is faithful and just will continue to move the church forward into his glory.

Jean Weening lives in Calgary and is a member of Emmanuel Christian Reformed Church.

News/Opinion

The first Reformed minister ordained in Canada

... continued from page 15

was served almost exclusively by laymen, one of the first being Michael Ley, a blacksmith from Switzerland. Attempts were made to recruit a Reformed pastor with a knowledge of the German language in both Pennsylvania and Germany, but those efforts did not bear fruit.

His parishioners seem to have been happy enough with him, and the simple sermons preached by Camminga were perhaps what his audience wanted to hear.

It was then that the Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg turned to Camminga, whom they obviously knew because he had lived amongst them for some years and had, no doubt, worshiped with them as well. Although not German himself, Camminga had a sufficient command of the language that the German-speaking Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg believed that he could serve as their pastor. Whether Camminga prepared for the ministry, with the help of Seccombe, in response to the call he received from the Reformed Protestants in Lunenburg, or whether he had already done so before he was approached by the Lunenburgers, is not clear.

While the request for Camminga's ordination came from the German Reformed Congregation in Lunenburg, it took place at the

hands of a (*ad hoc*) Presbytery, the first of its kind in what is now Canada, and Camminga was the very first Reformed clergyman to be ordained in this country. The Presbytery consisted of four clergymen: two of them Presbyterians and two Congregationalists, and Seccombe was one of the latter two. Although he was not formally trained as a pastor, the Presbytery justified its ordination of Camminga on the basis of his character and his innate abilities as a pastor and preacher, in addition to which the Presbytery called on precedent by pointing to a similar ordination in Scotland earlier in the century.

One of the questions put to Camminga was: "Do you own and will adhere to the profession of faith you have made to us, the Heidelberg [Heidelberg] and Assembly's Catechisms and the doctrines contained therein as being founded on and consonant unto the Holy Scriptures." The catechisms referred to were those of the German Reformed and the (Scottish) Presbyterians respectively.

Governor attended ordination

The ordination was attended by the colonial governor, Lord William Campbell, as well as other colonial dignitaries, and it took place in the Congregational Church in Halifax, better known at the time as Mather's Meeting House. The ordination sermon was preached by Rev. Seccombe, Camminga's tutor, while the ordination itself was performed by Rev. James Murdoch, the Presbyterian minister

from Horton Township in the Annapolis Valley. The entire ordination service, including the sermon, was published by A. Henry (Heinrich), a Halifax publisher, and it could be purchased for the princely sum of one shilling.

During his nearly fifty years as pastor of the German Calvinists in Lunenburg, Camminga must have preached close to 5,000 sermons, of which at least 98 have been preserved. The earliest of the surviving sermons dates from 1772, and the latest from 1817, by which time Camminga is known to have been preaching sitting down on account of infirmities of age. This body of sermons constitutes one of the largest, if not the largest, collection of such materials in Canada outside Québec dating back to the late 18th and early 19th century.

Never mastered English

While every last sermon in this collection is in the German language, and it appears that Camminga really never mastered the English language, his knowledge of German was far from perfect, as the sermons that have survived demonstrate quite clearly. It may be assumed that he knew little or no German before he arrived in Nova Scotia in 1752, and the German that he knew at the time of his ordination in 1770 he had acquired for the most part while living in Lunenburg between 1753 and the early 1760s.

As may be expected, his German is full of Dutchisms with regard to spelling, grammar, and so forth. In fact, it is not free of Frisian

linguistic influences and characteristics either, and it would have been surprising if it were otherwise. Consequently, one may well wonder how well his audience understood him, initially at least, and that problem was compounded by the fact that virtually all members of his congregation came from central and upper Germany, as well as from Switzerland, rather than from lower Germany.

Straightforward homilies

Lacking a formal theological training, it comes as no surprise that Camminga's sermons are relatively simple and straightforward homilies, sprinkled liberally with biblical texts, as well as many references to the Heidelberg Catechism, and the theologian he alludes to most often is Johannes Piscator (1546-1625), a German who taught at the Universities of Strasbourg and Heidelberg. However, the sermons contain little in the way of dogmatic, or systematic, theology, and even the biblical theology contained in them cannot be said to have been well developed in most instances. Even so, his parishioners seem to have been happy enough with him, as can be deduced from the correspondence passing between Camminga and Seccombe, and the simple sermons preached by Camminga were perhaps what his audience wanted to hear. For his congregation consisted almost solely of farmers and fishermen who had received very little, or no, formal education. Perhaps not surprising, but unfortunately nonetheless, is the fact that the sermons throw little or no light on life in colonial Lunenburg.

Ministry of nearly 50 years

During his long ministry of nearly 50 years, Camminga kept a pretty meticulous record of all activities associated with his role as pastor. Hence we know that he solemnized 426 marriages, and he begins the register of marriages with Genesis 2: 18: "It is not good that man should be alone." With the birthrate then being what it was, it is not surprising that he baptized a total of 2,705 children, and the baptismal record opens with Mark 10: 14: "For such is the kingdom of heaven." If the birthrate was high at the time, so was the mortality rate, for Camminga conducted 457 funeral services, and he opens the record of these services with Hebrews 9: 27: "It is appointed unto men once to die." Amongst those he buried were his second wife, as well as three children born to his third wife, namely Catherine Bailly whom he married in 1783, following the death of his second

wife the previous year.

From his correspondence with Seccombe, as well as from other surviving records, we know that Camminga was a highly esteemed and much loved pastor who greatly contributed to the health and success of the German Reformed Congregation in Lunenburg in his own time and thereafter. When he died in 1820, his remains were buried beside those of his second wife beneath the floor of the church in which he had labored so long and diligently, and their burial in this location was, no doubt, meant to convey the respect and esteem in which they were held by the congregation.

In 1909 their remains were removed from beneath the church during its reconstruction, but by that time the German Reformed Congregation in Lunenburg was known as St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, and had been known as such since 1837. However, to keep alive the memory of Camminga, the first pastor of what was, and is, now St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, a commemorative stained-glass window was unveiled in St. Andrew's at the time of its reconstruction. The remains of Camminga and his second wife were formally reburied behind the church in 1968 and a fitting monument was placed over them at that time. The reburial took place in the presence of some 20 direct descendants of Camminga.

Family portraits remain

Finally, it may be noted that we are fortunate in having a portrait of Camminga, one that was painted by a grandson, namely Joseph Brown (Bruin) Comingo (1784-1821). He received formal training as an artist and is believed to have been the first native born and locally trained artist in the Maritimes. Besides the portrait of his grandfather, portraits he did of his father and mother have survived, as well as of his wife in addition to portraits of a number of other individuals. Also surviving are scenes of a number of towns in the Maritimes and of the Anglican church in Windsor, Nova Scotia. Especially the portraits are accomplished works of art and betray a considerable degree of formal training. Like his grandfather the pastor, Comingo (Camminga) the painter deserves further study and wider recognition.

(This article is based almost exclusively on records found in the Provincial Archives, Halifax, N.S.)

Gerry Gerrits is an Associate Professor of History at Acadia University, in Wolfville, N.S.

Summertime empty pews

... continued from page 16

under a large elm tree. That suited us so well that we did it again this summer. It's much cooler outside and it opens us up more to our inner-city neighborhood. That is the part of our story that she used in hers.

Keeping members connected

Another problem of the summer slump is to keep members connected to the life of the congregation while they are absent from June to September. The treasurer worries about a summer drop in giving, but that is met by providing church-addressed envelopes so that contributions can be mailed. Some churches even arrange for automatic withdrawal and direct deposit from your bank account. But \$S's are not the

major issue.

Members who are unhappy or on the edge of the congregation can drop out during the summer with little notice. And members who are a vibrant part of the fellowship feel sad when they did not realize a fellow member faced a major struggle without their prayers. So we mail the weekly bulletin on request. We send the newsy part of the bulletin by e-mail. We have a prayer line where the joys and concerns of the week are listed; it can be called long-distance. At the end of the summer we publish a list of happenings: births, deaths, operations, etc., so that members who have been away can catch up on the well-being of the congregation.

Empty pews make it look like a summer slump. But there's plenty to do for those left behind. Summer

ministries of worship, pastoral care, Vacation Bible School, food pantry, outreach, council transition, preparations for the fall program keep us occupied in town. And we look forward to the return of our vacationing sisters and brothers — lightly tanned (we hope) after liberal use of sun screen, fresh and rested with new awareness of the Creator's grace and power, ready to tackle the work after their summer Sabbath.



Morris Greidanus is a Canadian-American living in Grand Rapids, Mich. He has served at First CRC, Grand Rapids, since 1985.

News Comment

Nose for News



Bert Hielema

IN THE LAST TWO decades, I have learned a lot of geography. Bhopal, the name was unknown to me until an American chemical plant exploded and killed and maimed thousands of Indian people. I had never heard of Chernobyl until the nuclear facilities there melted and contaminated millions of people, increasing cancer rates over a wide area. Kyoto, a large city in Japan became a by-word in the world when a historic environmental protocol was signed there five years ago, setting limits to the greenhouse gases national economies were allowed to pump in the air.

Wars, too, have acquainted me with new places on the globe, such as Kosovo and Kabul and Kandahar. Somehow our acts, whether warlike or environmental-wise, have focused my attention on especially those places where bad things are happening.

For some, mostly right wing politicians, the word Kyoto has become a curse. The very thought that we must curtail our use of automobiles, of airplane flights, of air conditioning or ration our energy use, has become unpatriotic, especially in Canada and the U.S.A.

The U.S. uses more energy per person than any other country, consuming about 26 per cent of the world's oil, two-thirds of which is burned in transportation. That works out to an incredible 8.77 tons of oil per person, more when imports are counted.

WE, IN CANADA, ARE nipping at their heels: we use 8.67 tons of oil per capita, partly because we export a lot. Even though the combined economies of Europe are about 20 per cent larger than that of the United States, they use less than half the energy: a comparatively skimpy 3.86 tons. Why do we use so much?

It used to be that lawnmowers were pushed. Then they became self-propelled. Now the owners of immaculate — that is pesticide-ridden — lawns, ride over it — often all 200 pounds of them — burning buckets of fuel in the process, breathing buckets of

pollutants also and burdening the health system with double, triple and quadruple by-passes.

It used to be (1975) that we North Americans drove a total of 2.5 trillion kilometres per year. Now, we are doing closer to five trillion. In that same time span our body mass has also increased, together with the rate of diabetes, cancer and heart attacks. It used to be that polio and tuberculosis were illnesses our grandparents were afraid of. Now new diseases are emerging, while the old ones pop up again.

HERE IN THE STATES, where I am at this point, the West Nile virus is big news. Until three years ago the disease had never even been detected in North America. No one knows how the virus arrived here. In 1975 we thought that most infectious diseases had been conquered, but since then we have increased our vocabulary with such words as Lyme — Mad Cow — Legionnaires disease, AIDS of course, the Ebola virus. And I am pretty sure within a few years we will hear and perhaps experience something the cool north has yet to taste: malaria and dengue, also carried by mosquitoes.

All this because — to name a few small examples — rather than pushing a mower, rather than walking or biking to a store, rather than carpooling to work, rather than turning off a light in an unused room, we keep on increasing the use of energy consuming gadgets, big and small. At this point I am ready to say: dammit. If we keep on doing these crazy things, we better deserve what is in store.

And what is in store is not pretty. From Global warming to our eating habits, we see a continuous domino effect. People who plead for sanity, who oppose the threats of endless consumerism and industrial expansion, are often called extremist or radical. I echo Rev. Martin Luther King's words: "The nation and the world are in dire need of creative extremists."

With another Earth Summit history, this time in Johannesburg on Sustainable Development, we have

heard and seen and read a lot about the State of the Earth in the past weeks. Well, unless you and you and you and me change our ways by continuously making small, conscious steps toward healing the earth, and refuse to see toxic pollution and the poisoning of millions by pesticides as "usual and customary and the price to pay for progress" and, instead, become extremists, that is a person who sees our way of life as crazy and stupid and dangerous and suicidal and ungodly, any number of United Nations conferences are just another waste of time and another burden on the already fragile planet we live on.

HOW FRAGILE IS OUR way of life? Our economy is a prime example of our vulnerability. "The economy is on a firm foundation. The purpose of a strong foundation is to build on it," so said the President of the United States at the special one-day economic conference in Waco, Texas, a few weeks ago. It reminds me of a well-known church hymn, which, adapted to that gathering could have been sung as: "How firm a foundation, we friends of the sword, is laid for our faith in Bush's marvelous words."

How firm is a foundation that is based on imported oil? Take our thirsty vehicles. They alone provide 20 per cent of all jobs, from making them to servicing and insuring them, from constructing highways for them to policing them, from finding and refining oil to fueling them. All of North America, the subdivisions, the malls, the Interstate Highway System, were made by oil. We fall and stand with the stuff. Oil made us all. Without it we would be like Africa, depending on manual power, hacking the earth with a hoe, using human muscles to do all the work.

American power is partly psychological. Uncle Sam is strong because it is perceived as strong. Of course it has the largest army in the world, but lately something has happened that has made the military not all that important anymore. September 11 took place in spite of American might, and it was carried out by Arabs most of them from Saudi Arabia. Curiously our entire economic foundation depends on the willingness of the Arab world to supply us with a lifeline.

Saudi Arabia alone has a quarter of the world's oil reserves. Iraq and Iran together have one-third. How strong is a foundation built on questionable Arab allegiance and disputable Muslim compliance?

What is that Arab world like today?

For a long time it has had a severe inferiority complex, dating back to colonial times when the West called the shots. In 1900 the price of oil was \$1.20 per barrel. Thirty years later, after the Wall Street crash, that price was substantially the same, at \$1.19. After Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II, the price fell to \$1.14. After that war it rose again to \$1.20. In 1950 it edged up to \$1.70 and 10 years later to \$1.80. Then Esso — now Exxon — announced that, due to overproduction, it would pay ten cents less per barrel without consulting the Arabs, whose only income depended on the royalties. The Seven Sisters — as the oil companies were called — regarded themselves as the energy masters of the globe. This caused a momentous mental shock in the Middle East oil region, made worse when tiny Israel in 1967 routed the combined might of Egypt, Syria and Jordan.

BUT TIMES HAVE changed. After the unilateral move by Esso, Perez Alfonso, oil minister of Venezuela said: "Since that's the way it is, we are going to organize a club, a very closed club, a club that will control 90 per cent of the crude oil in the world." The world experienced this in 1973 with the oil embargo when the Oil Producing Exporting Countries (OPEC) quadrupled the price of crude and did so again in 1980.

Arab morale was again boosted when Muslim Afghanistan defeated the Soviet Union. Then, in 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and, although Saddam Hussein was quickly defeated, his mere survival was regarded a grandiose success. Also the sudden U.S. retreat from Somalia was perceived an American defeat. Then came September 11, 2001.

These five morale boosting events reversed the Islamic sense of impotence, which already had given birth to a global Al-Qaeda network and fostered a deep anti-Americanism in the entire Islamic world, made worse by the U.S. support of Israel and its strong military presence in Saudi Arabia.

So, when Bush claims that the economy is on a firm foundation, he is spouting political clap-trap. He cannot deny that our entire way of life depends on the oil controlled by a volatile and increasingly hostile Middle East. Although most Arab oil goes to Europe and Japan — Canada in the north, Mexico and Venezuela in the south, together with Texas and Alaska, supply the

bulk of the U.S.A. needs — even a 10 per cent reduction will throw our world into deep turmoil. How will the U.S.A. deal with this shaky foundation?

I HAVE AN IDEA THAT Washington intends to apply psychology to the problem. The CIA and the FBI have discovered that there is no sure military or underhanded way to destroy the al Qaeda movement or any of its murky allied organizations. They can be harassed, disrupted, but not weeded out. Here is where Saddam Hussein comes in. He can be easily identified, unlike elusive Osama bin Laden. The Iraqi despot is one of the five pillars on which the new-found self-esteem of the Arab world has been based. He has successfully outwitted American pressure for more than a decade, has seen the former Bush president be thrown out of office and still stands. So he is a statue of defiance, a symbol of the new Arab power.

Because of oil and Israel, the U.S.A. cannot abandon the Middle East. Unable to destroy the Al-Qaeda machine, the only path left open is war on Iraq. A successful regime change there would deal a fatal blow to the Arab psyche, and — so could be the reasoning — deflate the Middle East macho mood enough to give the Arabs that former sense of failure and hopelessness that made colonial suppression possible before.

Of course, this is all conjecture. Yet, the Middle East is of vital importance to us all. Since energy conservation here — I write this while in Minnesota — has been ruled out as a viable option, since a tax on fuel, say a dollar per gallon, is regarded as akin to treason, only unhindered access to cheap fuel is seen as politically possible. Occupation of Iraq and control of its oil reserves will take the pressure off price increases, break the back of an already weakened OPEC and give Israel breathing room. That, it seems to me, is the real reason why the Bush administration is obsessed with Iraq.

No doubt, the U.S.A. is playing a very dangerous game, with the fate of the entire world at stake. If I am correct, this strategy is designed to strangle the soul of Al-Qaeda and destroy the Arab sense of self worth. In this way, it expects to solve both the Palestinian problem and also secure the oil supply for decades to come.

Bert Hielema sent this from St. Paul, Mn. He, most of the time, lives in Tweed, Ont.

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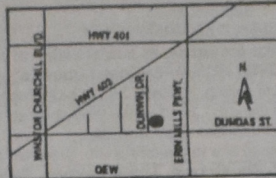
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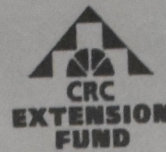
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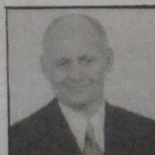


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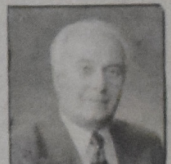
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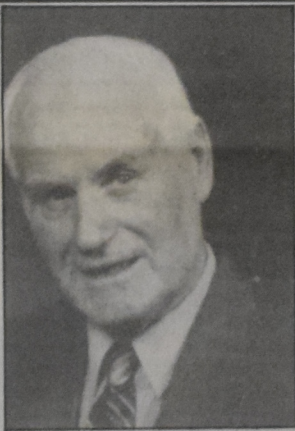
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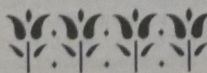
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Classifieds	Anniversaries	Obituaries
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The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$35. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$16 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened.</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce the birth of a child in our paper. Please let us know when placing your ad that you want to take advantage of this offer.</p> <p>SUBMITTING YOUR AD Mail: <i>Christian Courier</i> 1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines, ON L2R 1C7 fax: 905-682-8313 Email: accounts@christiancourier.ca</p> <p>OTHER INFORMATION a) <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format and editing style. b) Please provide us with clear copy. <i>Christian Courier</i> is not responsible for any errors due to hand written or phoned-in advertisements.</p>	<div></div> <p>1952 September 25 2002 Westerbork, The Netherlands "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain." LUKE and FEMMY SCHIPPER (nee Lubberts) will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary, the Lord willing, on Sept. 25. To help them celebrate will be their 9 children, 23 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren (3 more on the way). For this, we thank the Lord for His faithfulness. Congratulations Mom and Dad. An invitation to an open house for all who would like to celebrate with them will be Sept. 28, from 1-4 pm at 2433 Port Davidson Rd. Smithville, Ontario. All are welcome. Best-wishes only! "Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."</p> <p>Birthday</p> <div></div> <p>ARIE EDELMAN Born in Bodegraven, The Netherlands, on Sept. 27, 1912, will celebrate his 90th birthday with his wife Marie at an Open House tea for family and friends to be held</p> <p>Sunday, September 29, 2002 at Douglas Recreation Centre Multipurpose Room 20550 Douglas Crescent Langley, BC Between 3:30 and 5:30 pm</p> <p>Happy Birthday from your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. We thank God for your love and support. And we pray that his joy and peace will continue to surround you. Home Address: 20128 42A Ave. Langley, B.C. V3A 3B4</p> <p>Birth Announcement</p> <p>With praise and thanks to our heavenly Father, Klaas and Hammie Holman wish to announce the birth of their 12th grandchild</p> <p>MAKENA MARIE Born on August 6, 2002. Proud parents are Gregory and Angela Skrobar of Windsor, Ontario.</p> <p>CO and ALICE VANDERLAAN (nee Hoekstra) "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:31 On September 1, 2002, on the occasion of their wedding anniversary, we celebrated with our parents and grandparents 40 years of love and faith. Praise Him from whom all blessings flow! Deb & Gord Bosker Brad, Todd, Alex, Mitchell, Tessa Karen & Dave Groenewold Nathaniel, Jeremy Denise & Ray Dykstra Sean, Jamie, Kelly Darren & Neeru Vanderlaan Nirveli, Kyle, Indyanna Home Address: 8706 - 160A Street Edmonton, AB T5R 2K2</p> <p>1947 September 11 2002 Lamentations 3: 22, 23 With praise and thanksgiving to God, we joyfully announce the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, GERRIT and ANDREA BARTEN (nee Vijn) May the Lord continue to bless you richly as you continue to be a blessing to us. With love from your family, Betsy & Dick Braam - Georgetown ON Jason & Retisny - Evan, Sarah & Josh deBoer, Ryan & Hannah Ann & Tony Bouma - Calgary AB Peter & Lori, Brian, Diana, Jaclyn, Monique, Mariesa Klare & Maria Barten - Guelph ON Michelle & Bill Bronsema - Emma, Olivia; Jeff & Rose; Karen, David (in heaven 1998), Julie Jacqueline Barten - Mississauga ON Home Address: 14 Staveley Crescent Brampton, ON L6W 2R9</p> <p>1947 September 4 2002 "For the Lord is good and His love endures forever, His faithfulness continues through all generations." Psalm 100:5 With thankfulness and praise to God we celebrate the 55th wedding anniversary of our parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, CHRIS and WILHELMINA DUIKER An open house will be held D.V. on September 14, 2002, 2-4 pm at the Guelph Christian Reformed Church 287 Water St. Guelph, ON</p> <p>Obituary</p> <p>HARRY SIEBENGA After an incredible 92 years, the Lord took Harry Siebenga home on August 15, 2002. He began his life's journey in Wartena, Friesland on July 7, 1910. He immigrated to Canada as a vibrant, vigorous 19 year-old and farmed in the Lacombe, Alberta area for 70 years. In 1941 he married Fokke Van Dyk and over the years the Lord blessed them with nine children. Wayne, Angeline, Ren (Barb), Agnes Sondergaard (Wayne), Cecil (Sylvia), John (Albertha), Calvin (Laura), Thom (Tessa) and Stan (Stacey); 32 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. Dad's greatest legacy to his family and community was his love and reliance on the Lord who was his only comfort in life and death. A celebration of his life was held at the Woodynook Christian Reformed Church, Lacombe, on Tuesday, August 20, 2002. If friends desire, memorial contributions may be made to the Lacombe Christian School, 5206-58 St., Lacombe, AB T4L 1G9. Expressions of sympathy maybe forwarded to: Fokke Siebenga, Lacombe Senior Lodge, C & E Trail, Lacombe, AB T4L 1B3</p> <div><p>December 14, 1912 July 11, 2002 Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow</p><p>GERRIT JAN ROSEBOOM of Welland, Ontario, passed away peacefully at Shalom Manor, Grimsby. Dad has joined our mother and his beloved wife Aaltje (Sept. 10, 2000).</p><p>"As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower in the field, the wind blows over it and it is gone." Psalm 103:15 Dad and Mom are sadly missed by their 9 children, John Roseboom - Gananoque, ON Hennie & Dirk Koolhaas - Lindsay, ON Grace & John Vitols - Unionville, ON Ray & Jean Roseboom - Peterborough, ON Elly & Greg Motolanez - St. Anns, ON Jack Roseboom - Lowbanks, ON Lloyd & Bev Roseboom - Port Colborne, ON Gary & Norma Roseboom - Canfield, ON Antony Roseboom - Welland, ON and their 16 grandchildren and 5 great-grandchildren. Interment: Pleasantview Memorial Gardens, Fonthill, ON Correspondence: Mrs. Elly Gallinger, 2200 Rosedene Road, St. Anns, ON L0R 1Y0</p><p>July 19, 1930 August 8, 2002 Sassenheim, Oshawa The Netherlands Ontario HELENA VAN HARTEN (nee Kooger) After a long illness, the Lord has taken home our beloved wife, mother and grandmother, Helena Van Harten. Knowing that she was going to her Lord and Savior is a great comfort to us all, family and friends alike. Funeral service was held in Port Perry at Hope CRC on August 12, Pastor Norm Sennema officiating. Beloved wife of Ralph Van Harten. Beloved mother of: Erica - Port Perry Richard (deceased) Brenda & Ivan DeJong - Nestleton Alex, Kristen, Natalie, Joselyn Dave & Lis - Cedar Springs, MI Rob (Amy), Amanda, Laura, Mark Mart & Marg - Sunderland Cheryl, Steven, Richard Correspondence: 350 Major St. Port Perry, ON L9L 1E8</p><p>February 19, 1940 August 22, 2002 Koekange, The Neth Brampton, ON After a long but courageous struggle with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma and two days short of her 40th wedding anniversary, the Lord took home JANE BRUINSMA (nee Drost) She will be lovingly remembered and sadly missed by her mother, J. Drost, her husband, Ted, her children: Ken & Georgina-Cajic Toronto, ON Monica & Steve Chokly Trenton, ON Heather & Simon Williams London, England Anita Toronto, ON five grandchildren, eight brothers and sisters. Service was held on August 26, 2002, at the Second Christian Reformed Church. Private family burial was held at the Meadowvale Cemetery. Correspondence address: 96 Elgin Dr Brampton, ON L6Y 2E8</p></div>	



Classifieds

 Obituary	For Sale	Job Opportunities
<p>On August 10th, 2002 the Lord took home to Himself our much loved sister, sister-in-law and aunt THERESA ENGELINA FLEDDERUS (nee Huisman)</p> <p>We thank and praise God for her life and pray for God's comfort and nearness for her husband, Ralph, and her daughters, Lyn and Carolin and their families. She will be missed by all.</p> <p>Lords Day 1 Agnes & Hank Puurveen Nelly & Albert Hagen Bert & Jean Huisman Ria (deceased) & Gary Kroezen And nieces and nephews</p> 	<p>SHOES FROM HEAVEN Are you looking for ideas in teaching Bible truths to children or young teens? This 86 page book of bible-based stories, visuals, surprise features, musical items, contests, puzzles, etc. will be of great help to you. Also included are valuable teaching tips. Send \$4.95, plus \$1.60 for mailing, to: Rev. W. H. Moody, 413-3097 Palmer Dr., Burlington, ON L7M 4G8 (Please mention where you saw this ad)</p> 	<p>Youth Director Position: Are you committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Reformed faith, with a heart for the youth? Can you enhance existing programs? We are looking for a half-time Youth Director. If you feel God is leading you in this direction send your resumé or inquiries to: Education Committee Maranatha CRC 2805 Hwy 2 East Bowmanville ON L1C 3K5 Fax: 905-623-6979</p>
<p>Events</p> <p>The Christian Reformed Church of Blyth, Ont. will be celebrating its 40th Anniversary on Oct. 5 & 6, 2002. Breakfast and a social program on Oct. 5. Commemorative Worship Services with Guest Speakers and special music at 10 am and 7:30 pm on Oct. 6. All friends and former members are invited to celebrate with us. For more information contact Gerrie Bos. Email: jongerbo@hurotel.on.ca</p>	<p>Event</p> <p>The First Christian Reformed Church of Chilliwack, B.C., hopes to celebrate its 50th anniversary on Oct. 19th and 20th, 2002, D.V. All former and present members and friends are invited to help us celebrate God's faithfulness. For more information or if you need billeting call: Mrs. Erna Maarhuis at 604-794-7140 or e-mail: pjronda@telus.net</p> <p>To advertise your special event, call Christian Courier at 1-800-969-4838.</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>Huntley's Used Christian Books at 114 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2R 5X8. We buy and sell used Christian books. Open Tuesday - Saturday 10:00 - 5:00. 905-988-9223, e-mail: books@interpc.ca</p>
<p>NIAGARA FALLS ONT. CHR. REFORMED CHURCH "REHOBOTH" will be celebrating 50 years of BEING IN GOD'S SERVICE Oct. 26 and 27, a weekend of praise, thanksgiving and fellowship Former members, friends and well wishers heartily welcome. For further information, call Michael Havinga 905-358-3534 or e-mail at mhavinga@becon.org</p>		<p>Evangelistic Materials in Arabic Also in English, <i>The Bible and Islam</i> \$5.95 Canada \$4.95 U.S. and a folder of essays on understanding the Middle East (\$1.50) Write: The Back to God Hour P.O. Box 5070 Burlington, ON L2R 3Y8</p>

Miscellaneous

The Hugh and Eve Meeter Calvinism Awards for High School Seniors

Awards are given annually for research papers on the topics selected by the Calvinism Committee. The 2003 topic:

John Calvin's View of What It Means to Be Human

Awards are payable to student tuition accounts at the colleges approved for offerings by the CRC Synod: Calvin, Dordt, King's, Redeemer, Reformed Bible, and Trinity Christian.

1st Prize: \$2,500 • 2nd Prize: \$1,250

For research paper guidelines and further information, request the Meeter Award Brochure * from The H. Henry Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, Calvin College and Calvin Theological Seminary, 3201 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA, tel. 616-957-7081.

Deadline for completed papers: January 15, 2003

* Brochures have also been sent to high schools associated with Christian Schools International.

Dordt College

Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2003-2004 in the following areas:

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Develop and teach in an interdisciplinary criminal justice program. Qualified applicants should have a background in criminal justice, criminology, sociology, or related field.

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Spanish

Teach elementary, intermediate, and upper level courses in Spanish language, literature, and culture.

Social Work

Generalist; micro-practice background; methods courses and field practice.

Theology

General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses.

Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy Facsimile: 712 722-4496
Vice President for Academic Affairs E-mail:
Dordt College vpaa@dordt.edu
498 4th Ave. NE Web site:
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697 www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College is an equal opportunity institution that strongly encourages the applications of women, minorities, and disabled persons.

The Campus Ministry Committee of Classis British Columbia North West, invites applications for a full time

Campus Minister

to establish and develop a new campus ministry at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in Prince George, B.C.

UNBC is a relatively small university, which openly states it is committed to the spiritual development of students. This campus ministry position will be the first full time chaplain for the university geared to ministering to a diverse student population, faculty and staff, including members of the Christian Reformed Church. The unique nature of UNBC as a regional university allows it to be a strategic source of leadership to the entire region. The campus ministry is envisioned to become an integral part of the life and influence of the university.

We are looking for a Christian with a strong commitment to the Reformed faith;

- Is self motivated and able to develop this new ministry,
- Has advanced academic and/or professional degrees,
- Has experience in working pastorally with youth and students,
- Is able to relate well to religious and ethnically diverse groups on campus,
- Able to nurture healthy relationships with volunteer campus ministry workers from other denominations and faiths

A job description is available upon request. Please send a letter of application, a complete resume, two reference letters, as well as a brief outline of a personal vision for campus ministry to:

Rev. Pieter Hendriks,
4714 Loen Avenue,
Terrace, B.C. V8G 1Z7

E-mail: pieterhendriks@telus.net

Dead line for applications to be considered is September 30, 2001

Classifieds

Miscellaneous

Job Opportunity

Miscellaneous

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 1 Massey Square #1910, Toronto, Ont. M4C 5L4
 Phone/fax: 416-690-4774 • e-mail: vennen@attglobal.net

Miscellaneous

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC. ANNOUNCEMENT



Menno Elkema, President, shaking hands and presenting Executive Director Fred Vander Velde with a farewell gift.

After 27 faithful years of full-time services as our Executive Director, Mr. Fred R. Vander Velde, has decided to retire.

As board we are however pleased to announce that he has agreed to stay on for at least part-time. The CCEF administration and office will remain in Burlington, Ontario at his residence.

The volunteer board members will continue to raise and fund the necessary development of Christian textbooks with your financial help.

The CCEF is an independent Foundation, it reports regularly to the CSI board, Audit Reports are filed each year with Revenue Canada, and the Synod of the CRC.

CCEF is a member of the following organizations:

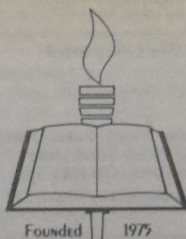
- Christian Stewardship Services (CCS Inc., since 1985)
- Canadian Centre of Philanthropy
- Associate member within the Canadian Council of Christian Charities (CCCC), our tax deductible No./BN11883-0207-RR0001

Menno Elkema, President

CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC. Board of Directors

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Richard Mouw, President,
 Fuller Theological Seminary, California



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Redeemer University College
 is pleased to announce the appointment of

Dr. Jacob P. Ellens

as Vice-President (Academic).

You are warmly invited to attend
 his inauguration on
 Friday, September 20, 2002,
 at 8 pm in the Auditorium.
 Reception will follow.

His inaugural address is entitled:
The Prayer of St. Anselm (1033 - 1109)
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Events/Advertising

Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

- Sep 14 Experimental Concert, 8 pm Bowmanville, Rehoboth CRC. See ad this issue
- Sep 18 Classis Niagara meeting 4 p.m. at Providence CRC, Beamsville, Ont. See this issue for details.
- Sep 20 Liberation Choir, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Second CRC, Brampton. See ad for details.
- Sep 21 Liberation Choir, Fall tour, 8 p.m. First CRC, London. See ad.
- Sep 28 Celebrating 50 years in ministry. Rev. W. Buursma at Strathroy East CRC. Ph: 519-245-0454
- Sep 29 Rev. Henry R. De Bolster will celebrate, D.V., his 40th anniversary in the ministry with a special worship service of thanksgiving and praise to be held at Mount Hamilton CRC. 9:30 a.m.
- Oct 5, 6 Bethel CRC of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan 50th anniversary. Contact Betty Veltkamp, 302-510 th Av N. Saskatoon, SK S7K 2R2 or email: bveltkamp@sasktel.net
- Oct 5, 6 Blyth CRC, Blyth, Ontario will celebrate its 40th anniversary. Breakfast & social Oct. 5, commemorative worship services, Oct. 6. See this issue for more info.
- Oct. 11 Experimental Concert, 8 pm St. Catharines, St. Denis Roman Cath. Church. See ad this issue
- Oct 12 Experimental Concert, 8 pm. Brampton, Emmanuel CRC. See ad this issue.
- Oct 18 Liberation Choir, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Our Lady Immaculate R. Cath. Church. Guelph. See ad.
- Oct 19 Liberation Choir, Fall tour, 8 p.m. Rehoboth United Ref. Church, Hamilton
- Oct 19 Organ, Piano, and Flute concert series, Bowmanville, Rehoboth CRC. See ad this issue.
- Oct 19 A Day of Encouragement and training for deacons, elders and other caregivers at Hamilton District Christian High School in Ancaster. Theme: "Go out in Joy!" Featuring 50 workshops including special sessions for elders and caregivers. Cost: \$45. Contact your deacons for a registration form, or Diaconal Ministries at 905-336-2920 or at www.diaconalministries.com.
- Oct 18, 19 Immanuel Christian School, Oshawa, Ont. 40th Anniversary. For event info, contact Trudy Bouma at 905-623-1103 or email: r.bouma@sympatico.ca
- Oct 19, 20 First CRC of Chilliwack B.C. 50th anniversary. For info & billeting: call Erna Maarhuis 604-794-7140 or e-mail: pjonda@telus.net
- Oct 24 Organ, Piano and Flute Concert, Owen Sound, Canadian Ref. Church. See ad this issue
- Oct 25 Organ, Piano and Flute Concert, Burlington, Ebenezer Canadian Ref. Church. See ad
- Oct 25 CRWRC 40th Anniversary Celebration at 7:30 PM at Brampton 2nd CRC, Steeles Ave(W). Presentations by DRS, Relief and Development. Please join us! Call Peter at 905-542-5271
- Oct 26 Organ, Piano and Flute concert, York CRC. See ad for more info.
- Oct 26 CLAC 50th Anniversary Celebration. Dr. Calvin Seerveld keynote speaker, Hamilton District Christian High. For further information, call Pauline at 905-945-1500.
- Oct 26 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Grace Reformed Church, 514 George St., Dunnville. Freewill offering. (519) 637-4357
- Oct 26, 27 Rehoboth CRC, Niagara Falls, 50th Anniversary weekend of praise, fellowship. For more information, call Michael Havinga 905-358-3534 or mhavinga@becon.org
- Nov 1 Christian Festival Concert under the direction of Leendard Kooij in Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto \$28/\$21/\$16. Call 416-636-9779
- Nov 5 The Annual 2002 Church & the Law Seminar will be held on Tues., Nov. 5th, 2002 at Bramalea Baptist Church, Bramalea located in Greater Toronto. This year's theme is "Essential Legal Issues for Churches & Religious Charities". Registration forms are available at www.charitylaw.ca and the host, Carter & Associates, ph: (519) 942-0001, Fax: (519) 942-0300 or email: seminars@charitylaw.ca.
- Nov 8 Music to Delight: A program of music with soprano soloist Renée Stalenboef, organist Ian Sadler, the Harboursaires from Goderich, the Men of Note from Clinton, at Clinton CRC, 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$10, Children \$5. For information, call 519-482-5372.
- Nov 16 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 60 Fifth St., Chatham. Also featuring Soloist Elisabeth Enzlin and Chatham-Kent Male Chorus. Sponsored by Chatham Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (519) 352-4980
- Nov 16 Liberation Choir, Fall tour. 8 p.m. Ebenezer Christian Ref. Church, Trenton See Ad.
- Jan 17 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at First CRC, 181 Charlton Ave, Hamilton. Sponsored by World Wide Christian Schools. Freewill offering. (905) 765-5623
- Jan 18 Concert of Sacred Music by St. Thomas Crescendo Male Choir - 7:30 p.m. at Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, 130 Scugog St., Bowmanville. Freewill offering (519) 637-4357

Part-time Music/Worship Co-ordinator

Community Christian Reformed Church, a vibrant and growing church in Kitchener, Ontario, is accepting applications for a Part-time Music Worship Coordinator. The position will begin immediately. Candidates should possess the following:

- passion and experience in worship ministry
- maturity in Christian character
- skills in organization and motivation of others
- ability to develop worship teams
- ability to use contemporary, choral and instrumental music as an integral part of Spiritual growth and service
- leadership and musical expertise to structure, coordinate, and implement services of corporate worship
- appropriate education and training

We are blended in worship, reformed in perspective, committed to discipling the found and gathering the lost.

For a description of the position visit us on the web at: www.ccrcc.on.ca

Address letters of application and resume, by September 30, 2002, to:

The Search Team for Music/Worship Co-ordinator

Community Christian Reformed Church

1275 Bleams Rd., Kitchener, ON N2E 3X6

Email: office@ccrc.on.ca Fax: 519-743-4434 Ph: 519-743-9482

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Fri. Sept. 20, Second Christian Ref. Church
444 Steeles Ave. W. **Brampton**

Sat. Sept. 21, First Christian Ref. Church
507 Talbot St. **London**

Fri., Oct. 18, Our Lady Immaculate Roman Cath. Church
28 Norfolk St., **Guelph**

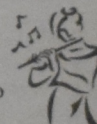
Sat. Oct. 19, Rehoboth United Ref. Church
77 Glancaster Rd., **Hamilton**

Sat. Nov. 16, Ebenezer Christian Ref. Church
18 Fourth Ave., **Trenton**

Concerts start at 8 p.m. For information, call Grace at 905-457-2348. Tickets \$10.00 available at the door.

Organ, Piano and Flute
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Martin Zonnenberg, organ/piano
Willem van Suijdam, organ/piano
Marjolein de Wit, flute



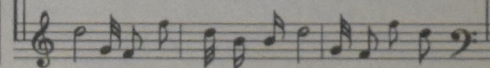
Saturday, October 19 at 7:30 pm, Bowmanville
Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, Scugog
St. (Willem will not participate in this one.)

Thursday, October 24 at 7:30 pm, Owen Sound
Canadian Reformed Church

Friday, October 25 at 8:00 pm, Burlington
Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Dynes Rd

Saturday, October 26 at 8:00 pm, York
Christian Reformed Church

All concerts admission: \$10.00



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Please join us at the following locations

Oct. 26 - 7:30 p.m. - Grace Reformed Church
514 George St. **Dunnville**

Nov. 16 - 7:30 p.m. - First Presbyterian Church
60 Fifth St. **Chatham**

Jan. 17 - 7:30 p.m. - First Christian Reformed Church
181 Charlton Ave. W. **Hamilton**

Jan. 18 - 7:30 p.m. - Rehoboth Christian Reformed
Church, 130 Scugog St. **Bowmanville**

All freewill offerings - For information 519-637-4357

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News

Global Pastors Network aims to plant two million churches

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Bill Bright, the founder of Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC), has started a project called Global Pastors Network (GPN) which aims to introduce one billion people to Christ in the next 10 years, and help start two million new churches. Bright calls this ambitious plan "the most important project I have ever been a part of in my life." But a professor who specializes in communications sees this as overly ambitious.

GPN is primarily Internet-based, and provides a variety of resources to pastors and churches through its website: www.globalpastorsnetwork.org

For instance, Sermon Central Search offers pastors access to thousands of sermons and illustrations on the site. Pastors can also submit their sermons to GPN via its website, so that others may access them.

The website also allows pastors to submit video or audio content to be posted on GPN's TV player to "serve as training and inspiration for pastors and ministers around the globe," according to the website.

For pastors and other Christians interested in networking, GPN offers a discussion forum covering topics like cross-cultural issues, discipleship, evangelism, marriage, missions, spiritual gifts, and much more.

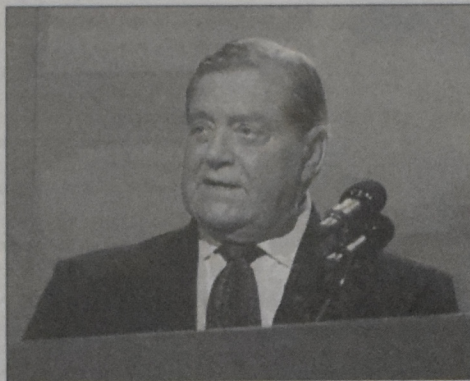
'Deep global vision'

Bright describes GPN, on the website, as "a deep global vision that the Lord of the harvest has laid upon my heart.... I believe that we have the God-given opportunity to touch every pastor on the planet with up-to-date teaching and training like never before."

Spelling out the idea in more detail, Bright explains, "What would be the total value of a team of leaders if, for the first time, they could connect millions of local churches, more than 10,000 Bible colleges/seminaries, universities, and millions of homes to the 'telecosmic' revolution for the purposes of evangelizing the lost and equipping the Church?"

As part of this project, GPN's leaders have divided the world into 6,000 "Million People Target Areas," or MPTAs. The network explains, "We are praying that each of the 6,000 MPTAs will soon be adopted by many churches and/or individuals, who will help start millions of house and large churches."

Although it is ambitious in scope, GPN raises some questions. For one, how can the network help Christian leaders and churches with no Internet access — in developing countries, for example? GPN is "working



Bill Bright, the initiator of Global Pastors Network.

out ways to do resource-sharing in those countries," says Chapman. Not all of GPN's resources are Internet-based, although Chapman says the Internet is a "driving force behind it."

Skeptical about network

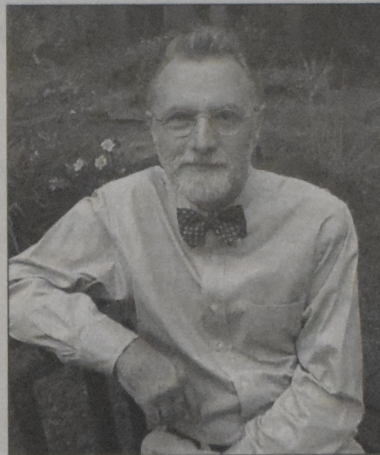
Quentin Schultze, a professor of communication at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. — and an expert in high-tech communication — is skeptical about GPN. "The concept of 'one website' for all church growth resources is hardly workable in an international context where globalization is changing the character of neighborhoods and cities throughout North America," he contends.

"Church growth has to be contextualized to time and place, not formulated according to any alleged 'laws of success.' In other words, church growth requires much discernment and wisdom, not just techniques. "In the best of all scenarios, native pastors from around the world would teach others about Jesus Christ and about his church. There is no lasting substitute for such contextualized learning and praxis on behalf of our Creator God."

Asked how GPN could help church leaders in developing countries, Schultze responds, "As even Bill Gates remarked in an interview, giving computers to developing countries will not likely solve any of their fundamental economic, political or moral-spiritual issues. In techno-luxurious North America, we think of digital technologies as crucial to life, whereas many parts of the world need the basics [of] daily life more than the gloss of fibre optics and Internet connectivity."

"On the other hand, a surprising number of native missionaries around the world do have Internet access via schools, libraries, cyber-cafes and the like. If they are fluent in English, the language of the Web by default, they can likely find some resources, including those at GPN, that might help them theologically, biblically and evangelistically."

Commenting on GPN's ambitious plan to reach one billion people with the Gospel message, Schultze asserts, "These kinds of overdone prognostications can too easily reflect a human faith in technology rather than a human dependence on God. As I argue in



COURTESY QUENTIN SCHULTZE

Quentin Schultze

The Habits of the High-Tech Heart: Living Virtuously in the Information Age [see review in Aug. 26 CC], humility is one of the most-needed virtues in the era of cyber-technologies. The Internet has become our Tower of Babel, a decadent symbol of the god-like human triumph over nature and the answer to practically all human problems in the West, from ineffective education to our health care and economic downturns.... Let's stop the sky-high predictions, which tend to idolatry, and accept the reality of the Fall and the folly of technological hubris in human endeavors."

But on a positive note, Schultze observes, "Online ministry has significant potential because so many people who go online are open to 'information' about religion — even if they are not open to the risk of entering a church. The Gospel Communications Network (www.gospelcom.net) attracts over 10 million 'hits' daily, making it the most popular religious website in the world.... But online ministry is still a lot of hard work, an inexact art, and very person-intensive in the end."

October 'Worldcast'

On October 18 and 19, GPN will broadcast a Christian meeting to more than 220 countries, explains Chapman. According to CCC, this event will be known as a "Worldcast Celebration," and "will showcase the capability of Global Pastors Network via RealNetworks to utilize the sophisticated tools of Internet technology to touch, teach and train millions of ministers on the essentials of life and ministry in the 21st Century."

"We believe this to be a first time ever event for the simultaneously received webcast," claims CCC, which notes, "The Celebration is simply to rejoice in celebration of God's goodness and faithfulness to Dr. Bill Bright and the ministry of CCC, of which GPN is a part. The live Worldcast is to showcase the capability and viability of a Global Pastors Network that ties together the whole world for communication of divine truth."

News Digest

An inappropriate name

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A police officer's name nearly cost her her job. The problem was the way El Paso officer Christine Lynn O'Kane's name appeared on her identification tag and e-mails: C. O'KANE.

O'Kane resigned from the El Paso Police Department on April 6, 2000, to take care of her ailing mother, the *El Paso Times* reported. She had a good service record, and her work file included a recommendation that she be reinstated if she reapplied in the future. But when O'Kane reapplied with the department months later, she found it no longer supported her reinstatement.

Police management cited the "inappropriate" use of her name as the basis for their denial. O'Kane had been using "C. O'Kane" in e-mails including a goodbye message to co-workers she sent in April 2000.

O'Kane appealed her case to the Civil Service Commission and the commission supported her position. She was rehired in September 2001, but now uses her maiden name, Whitaker.

The wrong Sydney

SYDNEY, Nova Scotia (Canadian Press) — An English couple that mistakenly landed in the wrong Sydney — Nova Scotia, not Australia — decided to make the most of their travel mistake, and described their stay as "brilliant."

Raeoul Sebastian and Emma Nunn, both 19, of London, England, bought their plane tickets April 19 from a travel agent over the Internet. When they did a plane changeover in Halifax, after a six-hour flight from England, they realized they were in Canada but thought that was the way the trip was routed.

"We're having fun. People are being really nice," said Sebastian. "I didn't have a clue about the area." He said they would track down the travel agent once they are home to find out what happened and to try and get back some of their money.

Ego of the month

MOSCOW — Calendar confusion was unleashed in the tiny, oil-rich dictatorship of Turkmenistan in August, when President Saparmurat Niyazov decided to rename every day of the week and month of the year according to his wish. Niyazov, who recently named himself President-for-life, decreed that months should be renamed after national heroes, starting with himself as the new January.

"I offer to call the first month of the year Turkmenbashi," decreed Niyazov, who has adopted that name (meaning Father of all Turkmenians) as a title. He is also planning to rename April after his mother. Ordinary people in Turkmenistan have expressed a resigned disgust at their president's latest show of vanity, reports the *Globe and Mail*. "This is a joke. The entire civilized world lives by the same calendar, but Niyazov decides to set us apart once again," complained 72-year-old pensioner Bairam Orazov.

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